6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
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KUNAPIPI

[p. i]

ooo KUNAPIPI ooo

[Title Page]

BY

RONALD M. BERNDT

A STUDY OF AN AUSTRALIAN
ABORIGINAL RELIGIOUS CULT

[p. iii]
[p. ii not processed]

F. W. CHESHIRE
MELBOURNE

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951

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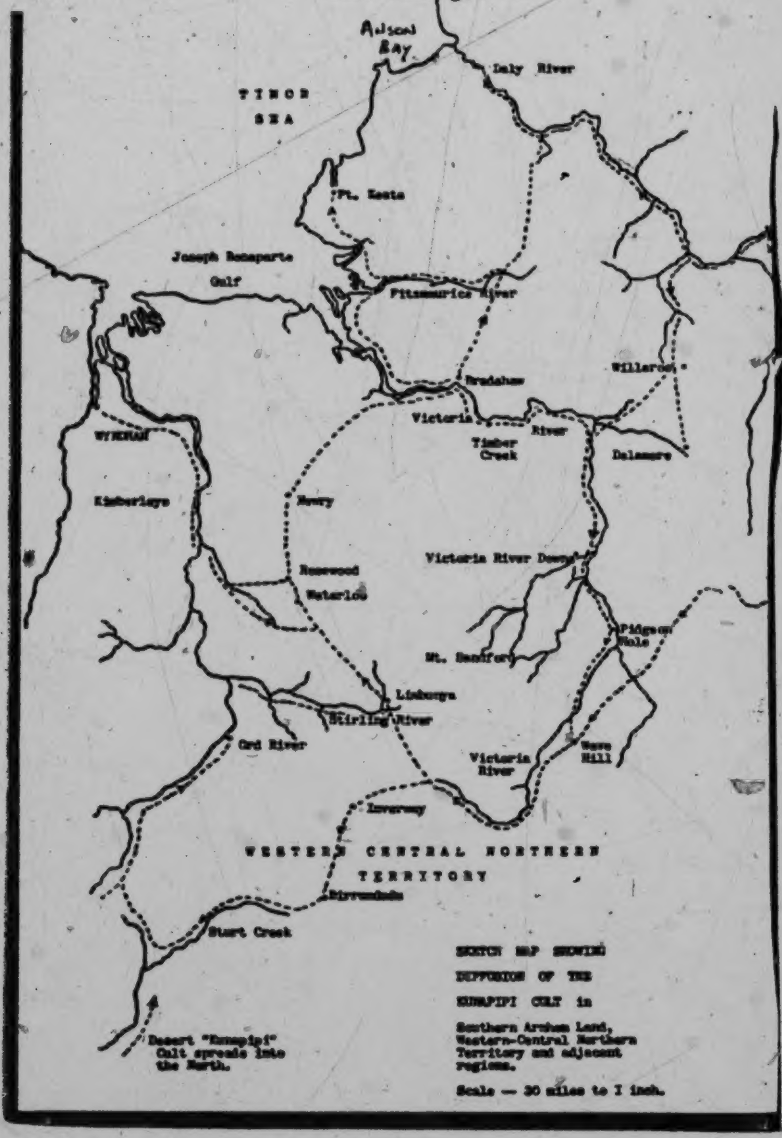
133
487
177
773


Anson Bay
Daly River
TIMOR SEA
Pt. Keats
Joseph Bonaparte Gulf
Fitzmaurice River
Bradshaw
Willeroo
Victoria River
Timber Creek
Delamere
WYNDHAM
Kimberleys
Newry
Rosewood
Waterloo
Victoria River Downs
Pidgeon Hole
Mt. Sanford
Limbunya
Stirling River
Ord River
Victoria River
Wave Hill
Inverway
WESTERN CENTRAL NORTHERN TERRITORY
Birrundudu
Sturt Creek
Desert "Kunapipi" Cult spreads into the North.

SKETCH MAP SHOWING
DIFFUSION OF THE
KUNAPIPI CULT in

Southern Arnhem Land,
Western-Central Northern
Territory and adjacent
regions.

Scale — 30 miles to I inch.

[Front End Map (A)]

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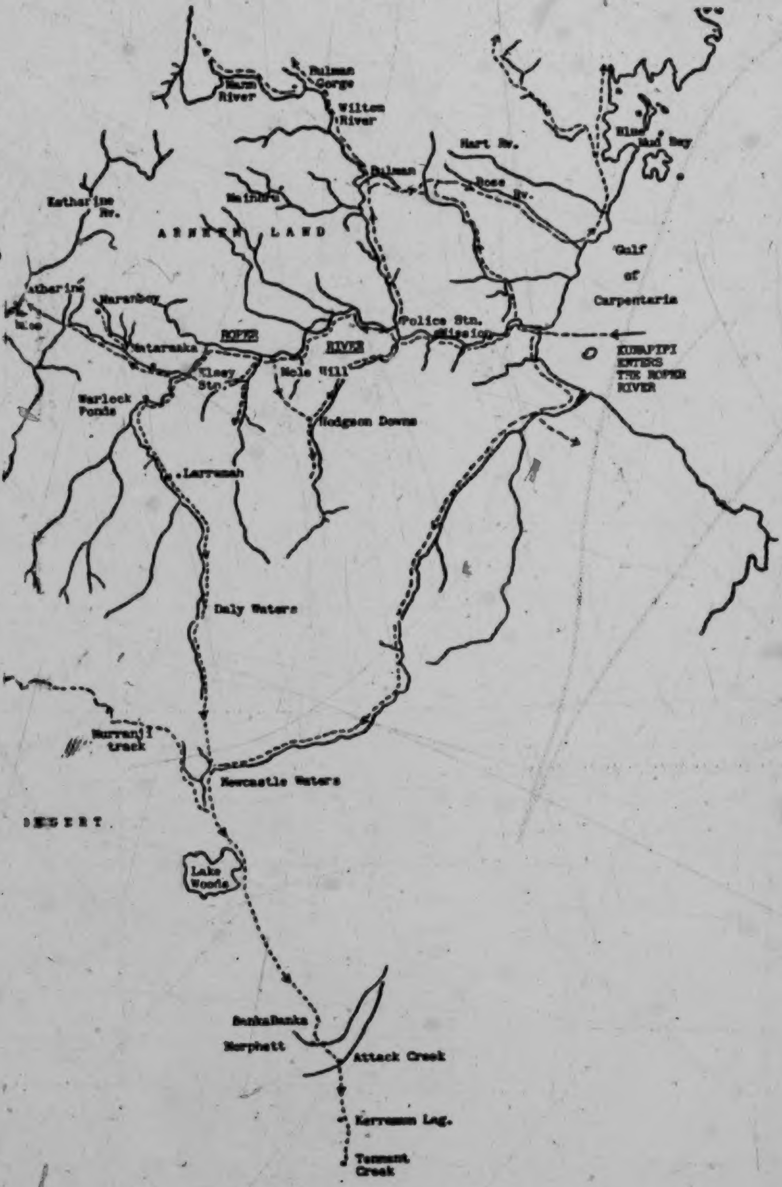

Mann River
Bulman Gorge
Wilton River
Hart Rv.
Blue Mud Bay
Bulman
Rose Rv.
Katherine Rv.
Mainoru
ARNHEM LAND
Gulf of Carpentaria
Katherine
Maranboy
Police Stn.
Mission
Mataranka
ROPER
RIVER
KUNAPIPI ENTERS THE ROPER RIVER
Elsey Stn.
Mole Hill
Warlock Ponds
Hodgson Downs
Larrimah
Daly Waters
Murranji track
Newcastle Waters
DESERT.
Lake Woods
Banka Banka
Morphett
Attack Creek
Kerreman Lag.
Tennant Creek

[Front End Map (B)]

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532
796

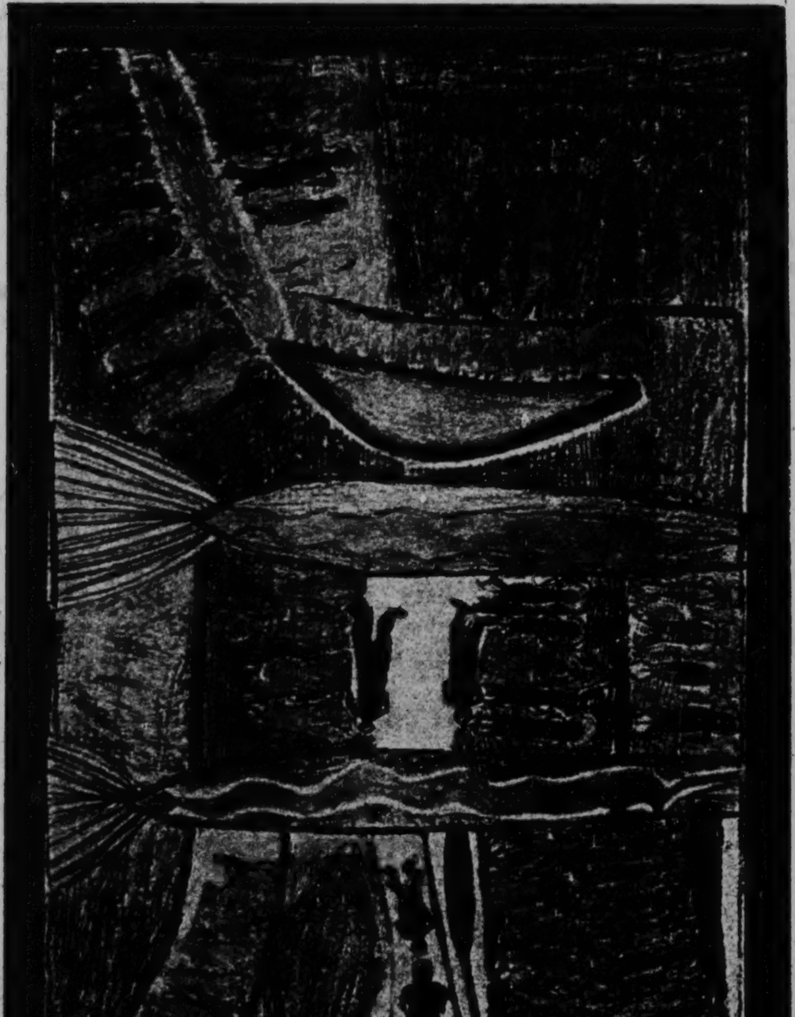

PLATE I

[Facing p. iii]

[For caption see category 116, p. X]

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[p iv]

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TO MY WIFE
CATHERINE

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Tidal water flowing, white foam
on the waves.
Fresh water from the rains flows
into the river.
There are the paperbark trees:
their soft bark falls
into the water . . .
Rain falls from the clouds . . .
Waters of the river are swirling . . .
She (Kunapipi) emerges, and walks
on dry land.

(Songs 1 to 6 of the traditional Kadjari-Kunapipi cycle of the Alawa: *vide* Chapter XI.)

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000

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Bottom photograph

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Some of the photographs illustrated here were kindly supplied by Mr. H. Shepherdson of the Methodist Overseas Mission, Elcho Island. The brown paper drawings were photographed by Mr. Woodward Smith, Sydney University. Other photographs were taken by Berndt during research work under the Australian National Research Council and during a special labour survey of the western-central Northern Territory cattle stations.

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Arnhem Land and Vicinity, showing the track of the Kunapipi

Sketch Map showing diffusion of the Kunapipi Cult in southern Arnhem Land, western-central Northern Territory and adjacent regions

INTRODUCTION

PROFESSOR A. P. ELKIN

Baldwin Spencer in his *Native Tribes of the Northern Territory*, 773
1914 (Chapter IX, and pp. 217–8) recorded myths which ascribed
important creative and formative activities to culture-heroines, in 114
particular to Imberombera and Ungulla Robunbun in western
Arnhem Land, and ceremonial activity together with original possession of the bullroarer, to Kunapipi women in the Roper River
region. All alike left spirit-children at places along the routes of their
journeyings, and the first two were responsible for the tribal and
linguistic divisions in their region, having "sent forth" spirit-children
to found the tribes.*

In 1937, Professor W. L. Warner's important book, *A Black* 114
Civilization, was published, giving the results of his field work in
1926–29 at Millingimbi (Crocodile Islands) and the neighbouring 773
region of north-east Arnhem Land. Half of it is a study of mythology 796
and ritual. Two of the most important figures are the Wawilak
sisters, who named the animals and plants as they travelled from
inland to the north along the Goyder River, and who, in an
endeavour to ward off the great ancestral python, Yurlunggur, and to
end the wet season, sang and danced the songs of four great rituals,
one of which was the Gunabibi (Kunapipi). The Yurlunggur swallowed the two women and their babies, causing their deaths, but
their spirits lived on and revealed the rituals to two Dreamtime men,
so that the important past should not be forgotten. This included the [304]
introduction of circumcision which the Wawalik had intended to
perform on their sons (Warner, pp. 250–9). In the Gunabibi ritual,
the Gunabibi is the bullroarer, and also symbolizes Yurlunggur who
swallowed and regurgitated the two women and their sons (pp.
293–4). Another important ritual myth is about two Djunkgao sisters
who came into the region from the south-east, naming natural species

---

* Compare too the similar myth of the "big woman", Warahmoorungee, oj [171]
the Iwaidja tribe, in this region, as given by Inspector Foelsche, "Notes on the
Aborigines of North Australia", *Journal, Royal Society of South Australia*,
Vol. V, p. 17. This is the "Mother", "Waramurunggoindju", who, Mr. Berndt was informed by the Maung at Goulburn Island, came from the Macassan Islands, and eventually by way of Timor and Bathurst Island to Cape Don, the Iwaidja and other tribal territories, and finally to east Arnhem Land. R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Section 3, to be published by the Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology.

114 as they came, making ritual-totemic wells or centres, and giving
birth to the ancestors of the present people. They made and carried
773 sacred totemic emblems, and instituted the Narra ritual in which
796 these are used; but some Dreamtime men stole the baskets in which
they kept these objects and performed the Narra—a theft which the Djunkgao took in good grace (pp. 336–40).

[114] As we read these myths and the description of the associated rituals, we detect a difference, at least in emphasis, in the rôles played
773 by women in the creative epoch in this region as compared with other
562 regions for which we have reliable information. According to the classic works of Spencer and Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (1899) and *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* (1904), and the later work of Carl Strehlow, *Die Aranda-und Loritja-Stamme in Zentral-Australien*, I, II and III, 1907, 1908, 1910, human beings arose from semi-human-animal forbears, or were given their forms in an operation performed by "self-existent" totemic beings on existing incomplete beings; and in some cases, too, in the more northern tribes, human beings just arose. There is no instance of one or two great culture-heroines being held responsible for natural features, tribes and languages, though women were included in many of the earliest groups of human wanderers; more explicitly the Unmatjera have a tradition of several groups of *ertwaininga* women who wandered across the country, carrying yamsticks, and leaving individuals behind at various spots, which became spirit totemic centres, from which these individuals went forth to be reincarnated.

In the sphere of ritual, however, the myths reflect a stage or period in which women took an active part and had full knowledge of sacred symbols. Thus, in one myth, three women from time to time painted themselves with sacred designs, carried the nurtunja (a sacred symbol), performed ceremonies and changed their totemic and subsection affiliations. In another, the Unthippa women in the course of their wanderings, used to carry off and circumcize any novices they found, an event to which reference is still made in circumcision ritual (*Native Tribes*, pp. 195–6, 433, 441–3; *Northern Tribes*, pp. 146, 150, 152–9).

171 If we compare the mythology of the centre and north-centre with
773 that of Arnhem Land as we knew it in 1937, we see that in both the
spirits of men and women pre-exist because of happenings in the
562 Dreamtime, and women in that period played an inner rôle in what
[774] is now ritual reserved for initiated men. In the former vast regions, however, women did not form the country, name natural species, determine the tribal and linguistic divisions, nor institute ceremonies But this is just what the culture heroines of Arnhem Land were said to have done. This difference in power, or in degree of function, was sufficient to suggest further research in this region into the rôle of the

culture-heroine in mythology; and all the more so, as no such dis- 171
tinctively creative powers were ascribed to females in the myths of 773
any other region then studied, such as the Kimberley Division of
Western Australia, the Great Victoria Desert, North Queensland, 562
nor South-East Australia. In the north-west and north-east of the
continent, the important creative culture-heroes are males and many
of them were at times in animal form. In the South-East not only was
the male aspect dominant, but there was only one great hero, for
each tribe or region, named here Bundjil, there Nurunderi, or
Baiami or Gulambra or Goin and so on.*

In 1939 my friend, Mr. W. E. Harney, who had spent many years [114]
in and around Arnhem Land, and has a greater and sounder knowl-
edge of Aboriginal custom, belief and ritual than any other layman
sent me some notes in which much prominence was given to the
"Old Woman," Kunapipi, both in doctrines and in ritual. After [794]
discussing the material with him, I was satisfied that in the Roper, 776
Macarthur and Victoria River areas, a very vivid cult of the "mother-
goddess" type was functioning. Her name varied, being Kunapipi, 773
Mumuna, Kliarin-Kliari, and so on, but she was usually referred to
as the "Old Woman" or the "Mother". She was the source of life in
man and nature, both in the Dreamtime or creative past and now.
In this activity she was associated with a great serpent, usually the
Rainbow serpent, who "made the road" into the womb for the pre- [775]
existent spirits to be incarnated and reincarnated. She was also the
very earth itself, that from which living things came and on which
they depended for sustenance. This doctrine was expressed in the
Kunapipi ritual. In it her womb was represented, by a trench into 796
which the initiands were put, and from which they were reborn. In
addition, the bullroarer, also representing her womb, when swung
at the ritual became the sojourning symbol of each initiand's ritual
or "wood" spirit. After the ceremony, when the Yermalindji, the
symbol of the great snake, was burnt in the earth-womb, the bull-
roarer was buried there also. Thus, the lad's ritual "shade" remained
in Kunapipi, and did so until the disintegration of the symbol, when [775]

---

* I can speak from personal field work for all these regions except the north-east. See also articles in *Oceania*, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 46-62, R. Piddington, "Karadjeri Initiation". Vol. VI, No. 1, pp. 66-93, Ursula H. McConnel, "Myths of the Wikmunkan and Wiknatara Tribes"; *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, No. 4, pp. 452-477, Vol. VII, No. 1, pp. 69-105, "Totemic Hero Cults in the Cape York Peninsula, North Queensland"; Vol. IX, No. 4, pp. 382-404, A. Capell, "Mythology in Northern Kimberley". Vol. XIII, No. 3, pp. 255-260, and Vol. XIV, No. 1, pp. 31-53; "A Preliminary Report of Field Work in the Ooldea Region, Western South Australia", by R. and C. Berndt, *Oceania Bound Reprint*, Sydney, 1945.

Also D. F. Thomson, "The Hero Cult, Initiation and Totemism on Cape York", *Journal, Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXIII, pp. 453-538; and "Notes on a Hero Cult from the Gulf of Carpentaria, North Queensland", *op. cit.* Vol. LXIV, pp. 217-236. A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, pp. 475-508.

796 [775] it went to his Dreaming or spirit home to wait for the return of the animating spirit after the death and final burial of the individual.

[789] [774] Further, because of the original life-giving power of the "Mother", the ritual which included many dances referring to natural species, was believed to ensure the normal cycle of the seasons. This, however, did not occur directly as though the effect of increase rites, for the ritual was not regarded as such; but just as, and while, men performed their ritual in the "Mother Place" to ensure their own births and rebirths, so the "shades" of natural species performed their own increase rites in the spirit-world.

[177] The details on which this brief analysis was based suggested that the Kunapipi ritual as described by Professor Warner as part of the Wawilak cycle and as having come from the south through the Rainbarngo (Rembaranga) tribe (p. 452), was a most important cultural element in Arnhem Land, the "pure" form of which must be sought along the line of the "southern" rivers such as the Roper, Katherine and Victoria.

177 773 796 [114] In 1946, I worked for a short period amongst the tribes on the Roper and Katherine and also visited north-east Arnhem Land, and in 1947 and 1948 worked amongst the Mangarai and Alawa on the Roper, and the Djauan and southern Rembaranga in southern Arnhem Land. While at Yirrkalla near Cape Arnhem in the north-east corner of the region I saw the ceremonial ground with the Nanggoru and Kanala where a Kunapipi ritual had been held some weeks earlier, and obtained information which showed that it had there coalesced with the Wauwalak (or Wawilak) myth, the very "hut", in which the two sisters and the baby were swallowed by *Muit* (Yurlunggur or Julunggul) the snake, being an important feature in the ritual. Moreover, the tradition, as given to me, was that Moit, that is the Wauwalak ritual, spreading south was met somewhere about the Rose River –Nungubuyu tribal country –by the Kunapipi ritual. For the people there, being afraid of his swallowing habits, killed him, and made their own *mumuna*, Mother Dreaming. The result is the present Kunapipi, with the Yermalindji –the Mother's yam stick, and at the same time the Rainbow Snake's symbol—and the Anggoru, the Mother's earth womb.

[114] It was quite clear then that by 1946 the Kunapipi ritual had reached Arnhem Bay, and had done so since early 1929, for Professor Warner wrote (p. 452) that it was not found in any of the clans around Arnhem and Buckingham Bays, or on the islands of the north-east though large numbers of the men from these districts went south to take part in ritual with the clans of the same general linguistic group who did possess it. Further, I was told in 1946 at Elcho Island that a local man, Kumu, had brought the Kunapipi in about 1929 to Elcho and other islands from Caledon Bay where he saw it.

It seems then that the Gunabibi (Kunapipi) as Professor Warner 177
saw it after coming through the Rainbarngo and being amalgamated
with the Wauwalak, did not necessarily diffuse east to Melville and 773
Arnhem Bays, though the Wauwalak myth may have done so. It is 796
more likely that it spread there up the coast from the Rose River
country; ultimately the "distributing" tribe was the same, the
Rembaranga (Rainbarngo) and the fusion with the Wauwalak on the
upper Goyder may have occurred before the Kunapipi reached Blue
Mud Bay.

In 1946, while at Roper River Mission, I was given a detailed myth
of the movement of the Mumuna (or Kunapipi group) and the ritual
(with no trace of the Wauwalak myth) from Blue Mud Bay south
along the coast to the Roper River, which was crossed about thirty
miles from its mouth, and shortly after, a Wadiri-Anyula man gave [115]
me an account of the journey of *Gilyeri-gilyeri mara-abana*, the
Travelling Woman, from the Roper, near the junction of the
Limmen, and of the spread of the ritual, through the Alawa and on
and on to Lake Woods and Newcastle Waters. Here the ritualists
linked up with the route of diffusion from the Lower Victoria River
through the Mudbara tribe and by Battle Creek.

This, incidentally, completed the circle of the Kunapipi route, for a study of the rituals and myths and traditions show that it also spread from the Victoria River east through the Wadman, Yangman and Mangarai territory and thence north to the Rembaranga, and on to Blue Mud Bay, and thence, as we have seen, south to the lower Roper, and so on to Newcastle Waters.

At the present time, too, some of the Kudjika songs of the Kuna-
pipi of the Roper River side, which I heard at the Elsey, are on their [533]
way south-west through Warlock Ponds and then eventually to Wave
Hill, west of Newcastle Waters, and on even to Wyndham, that is, to
East Kimberley.

The doctrines are still very real to the initiated Mangarai, whom
I have come to know during the past three years. We talk about the 773
myth or ritual; we mention the sacred key and pass words referring 796
to the "Mother", the bullroarer, the Yalmanindji, the "river" and
"billabong" (womb) on the ritual ground, or we repeat the words of 171
the chants: but let anyone pass by even thirty yards away and out of [123]
earshot—the subject is dropped immediately, until that person has
really gone by. And how interesting it is to hear on the Roper
almost the same ritual words as obtain at Yirrkalla, and then to hear
them again from Djauan and southern Rembaranga and others on
the Mainoru, south of Bulman Gorge, and 100 miles west again not
far from the Waterhouse! When I arrived at the latter place in
September, 1948, a Kunapipi ritual had been completed only a few
days before. I saw the headman and others who participated. There,
too, was the Kanalina and the Anggorna (Nanggoru) with the

773 Yeramalindji (Yalmanindji), a blackened mass, still in its original
shape, lying in the Nanggoru.
796 One special feature of this "Mother Place" was that on each of the
171 walls of both the Kanalina (the oval billabong) and the Nanggoru
(the semi-circular trench or "river"), the rainbow serpent, here
[532] called Muit, was engraved. Apart from what informants said, there
[346] was no mistaking the drawing. The walls were of hard clay and about
2 feet and a little more in depth.

Finally, the "Mother" ritual has spread north from the Lower Victoria River as far as Port Keats, where in 1944 the elders were assimilating the doctrine of the "Old Woman" (exoterically), but the desirable mother (esoterically), and the bullroarer with snake symbolism.*

The Appeal of the Kunapipi

A cult which spreads throughout a vast region as indicated in the
771 above outline, and spreads irresistibly, must satisfy a spiritual or
psychological need and make a captivating appeal. There is no mis-
796 taking the grip which the doctrine of the "Mother" and the Snake
has on the initiated, or their fervour and faith. But, why does the
cult appeal and grip in this way?

Let us outline its significant features. It highlights the maternal,
nourishing, reproductive, and indeed creative, principle in nature and
man, though not denying the male principle. That is, it associates the
cycle of the tropical seasons, and the increase of human beings and of
natural species with the concept of Mother—of birth from the womb.
[831] Further, it correlates this with sexual activity in which the male or
inseminating principle is involved. In the former aspect, we have the
Mother, symbolized by the ceremonial "Mother Place", and in particular by the earth womb, the *nanggoru*, for, indeed, she is the earth.
In the latter case we see the symbolism of the Great Snake: the
Rainbow Snake, and the Yermalindji.

Further, in the ritual, the male actors simulate sex intercourse,
796 which symbolizes both the impregnation or else the quickening of
786 the Mother herself, and also the intercourse of the animals represented in the rite. It is done for her and through her for them and all
nature. Finally, the actual sexual intercourse between the actors and
selected women near the ceremonial ground, as part of the total
ritual, not only witnesses to the indispensable rôle of women in
reproduction, but also makes the "Mother's" life-producing principle or power operative. Just as in arid Australia, the actors cause
blood from their arm vein or genital organ to flow on to the symbolic representation of the totem or totemic ancestor, giving it or
[789] him power to increase its kind; so too in Arnhem Land the actors'

---

* Mr. F. Parkes, a member of the Air Force, gained the confidence of these men, and recorded all he could.

786
sexual intercourse with the obvious representatives of the "Mother" 796
enable her to fulfil her important function. [789]

Thus, here as in the Ancient East, ritual sex-intercourse is a sacramental
act in the cult of the "Great Mother", on which her potency 773
and the survival of man and nature depend. In both regions we are 786
in the presence of a "Mystery Religion". The precious guarded
secret is only revealed to the initiated, the twice born, and that 796
secret, that "mystery", is the continuity of life. Life, however, is no 789
mere visible or external phenomenon. In all its forms it has a spiritual counterpart, its "shade". The Cult Mother is more than the Big Woman of the mythological period; she is eternal in the earth, and present and active in her "shade" form in every Kunapipi. The Great Snake, too, Muit or Yermalindji, is present in his symbols at the ceremony, teaching the "reborn" through the traditional words and ritual behaviour of the elders, speaking through them even as the prophet and teacher is the voice of his God. The ritual or "wood" shade, the spirit double of the initiand enters the bullroarer symbol of the Mother and with it remains in her "earth womb" until it goes to the spirit home. While the actors perform their rites to ensure the birth and rebirth of mankind and the "increase" of the Great Mother and the Great Snake as manifested in the rains and the consequent
fertility of the earth, the spirit-womb of the Mother is made
potent; in addition, as they represent in mime the behaviour of [825]
animals, reptiles, birds and insects, the "shades" of these creatures [774]
perform the increase ceremonies of their own kind in their own ritual places in the spirit-sphere. Finally, the women who have co-operated in the Kunapipi with their "outside" calls, responses, songs and dance (like the Bundami or Awalambi), and who then take part in
the ritual intercourse with men from the Mother Place, become [775]
bearers of the latters' ritual or Kunapipi "shades"; at least, such is the doctrine in the Roper River region.

So life is assured to man and nature for it is eternal in the spirit world, in the Great Mother who brings forth and whose impregnating
symbol is the Great Snake, the iridescent rainbow which never [821]
fails to join the sky to the earth.

Such is the appeal of the cult. Its function in the social and
economic life of a food-gathering people in a tropical environment 114
can be studied, and indeed is obvious and logical. A most valuable 794
attempt to analyse the North-East Arnhem Land cults from this
point of view has already been made by Professor W. L. Warner in 796
A Black Civilization. But why should such a Fertility Goddess cult 177
arise in Arnhem Land and the Victoria River region, and not also in the northern part of the Kimberley Division or in Cape York Peninsula, where the tropical seasons and conditions of living for a parasitic food-gathering people are similar? The answer probably lies in the differences in external contacts. Here it is sufficient to say

114 that the several centuries of contact with Macassan and pre-Macas-
177 san traders, fishers and sojourners which marked the Arnhem Land
794 coasts from the Victoria River right round to Groote Eylandt, were
796 not experienced in the other two tropical regions. It is, therefore,
possible that pre-Islamic religious influence was exerted on the
Aborigines, perhaps through individuals who accompanied the
Macassans and others to the islands to the north, for in some of
these, the earlier Hindu cults were cherished in spite of the prosely-
tizing nature of Islam. Moreover, the Mother cult-heroine is said in
[773] myths to have come through the sea, whether she be Kunapipi of the
Victoria and the Roper, or the Mother of the Iwaidja and other
tribes of Western Arnhem Land.*

Mana and Other Problems

The above is the general principle and question raised by the
114 Kunapipi cult. Mr. Berndt's book, however, in giving a description
778 and analysis of this cult, raises many other important matters. For
example, there is the problem of power or "grace" in religion, indi-
cated in north-east Arnhem Land by the term *dal*. It is the anthropo-
logical problem of *mana* over again. It operates through the Mother
[776] or through Ancestral Beings who in their "spirit parts" are present
in the ritual. But does the ritual automatically release that power,
setting it in motion for the welfare of man and nature? Or is it
manifested through life and increase by the will of the Mother or
other Being in response to the ritual? Obviously, according to the
doctrine, it cannot operate apart from such Being or Beings. Indeed,
is it not that Being in activity or rather in relation to man and nature
—an activity and presence realized in ritual? Problems associated
with the Doctrine of the Trinity are not peculiar to Christianity.

114 Mr. Berndt agrees with Professor Warner that the Aborigines are
not ignorant of physiological paternity. The ritual supports this con-
842 tention. True, these natives hold also the doctrine of pre-existence,
796 of spirit-children who enter the mothers for incarnation. But, what
this entry does is to provide the "shade", the eternal spirit-part, and
so give life to that which is already in the womb, as the result of
sexual intercourse. Intercourse does not merely prepare the way for
the entry of the child-spirit and for its subsequent birth; this is the
usual view. In addition, it is followed by the formation of the foetus

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* The point of entry of the Fertility Mother cult of north-western Arnhem Land is definitely placed by the Aborigines and their song cycles in the Coburg Peninsula. The Kunapipi cult, however, seems to be distinct from this, and while I incline to find its point of distribution in the lower Victoria region, the final decision must wait for more research in the field and further analysis of the material already in hand. Mr. Berndt's maps in this volume refer only to the recent and present movement of Kunapipi songs, the movement west from the Roper being a return along a song route to a western point of distribution, and not necessarily diffusion from a point of entry at the mouth of the Roper.

which then has to be quickened. The coastal Arnhem Landers have 114
had centuries of contact, and it may be that the usually accepted
Aboriginal doctrine of conception has been modified here. In any 842
case, granting the premises, the form in which they hold it is emi- 796
nently logical.

Amongst the many other interesting points raised by the author 114
is the vital significance of dreams, particularly for ritual and its inter-
pretation. One of Mr. Berndt's important contributions to the 123
anthropology of northern Arnhem Land is his systematic recording 787
of dreams—a sign of the confidence put in him by the natives, and
also a sign of the objectivity with which they regard dreams.

One last point: Mr. Berndt lays stress on the importance of the 114
ritual rôle played by women in this region. He is correct in doing so. 562
Though they are not on the "Mother Place", yet they are nearby 796
playing their part, a part which stems from the Dreamtime, when the
sacred ritual was theirs; and how else could it be, for life and birth is
through the womb? A cult of the Great Mother would have no
foundation apart from the women through whom her children must
be born. Women here have their sacred aspect and sacred rôle.

The Author and the Field

Mr. R. M. Berndt was well equipped for doing research into the 114
religion of Arnhem Land. After study in the Department of Anthro-
pology, University of Sydney, he with his wife (Catherine H. Berndt), 121
also an Anthropologist, did four years of field research amongst
Aborigines in both tribal and detribalized conditions. This included
about eighteen months on the south-west of Arnhem Land and on the
border of the Kimberley Division of Western Australia, where he
was introduced to the cult. In 1946 when the Australian National
Research Council was able to make a further grant to these workers, [122]
we selected the north-eastern corner of Arnhem Land as the main
field. Research there would be complementary to what Dr. Warner
had done eighteen years before; in addition it was an area subject
to the spread of native customs and rites from both the west and the
south, and was also likely to show some cultural effects arising from
long contact with Macassans or others who visited the region to [797]
engage in marine industry. Finally, although a Mission had been
operating at Yirrkalla for nearly ten years and an Air Force base had [177]
been established there during the war, causing some modification of
native life, in particular, lessening the degree of nomadism, yet in
spite of this, the fundamental drives and beliefs had not been
affected. Men in the prime of life as well as the old men still belonged
to the "old order". It was, therefore, still possible to study the native
religion in its cultural and social setting as a functioning institution.
Fortunately, I was able to assure myself of this during a visit and
inquiries in the region in 1946.

123 Mr. and Mrs. Berndt on their part had proved their capacity to obtain the confidence of the Aborigines, to be admitted into the "inside" life of the men and women respectively, and to work in the native language. These three qualifications are essential for a study of a subject so intimate as a religious cult with its many personal and social ramifications.

With regard to the language it should be emphasized that more is required than ability to use it only as a phrasebook tool for asking questions, or to record slowly long texts. It is necessary to follow the ritual songs as they are chanted, and the discussions on doctrine and ritual. Fortunately, previous linguistic research in the region had [114] been done by Dr. A. Capell of this Department, and the Methodist Missions at both Millingimbi and Yirrkalla had been using the local [797] related dialects for some years. The general principles of the language and a reasonable vocabulary were known. Armed with this knowledge together with much field experience, and living for nearly twelve months quite close to the native camp, a remarkable degree of proficiency was obtained. In this type of work, the result of the efforts of two persons is more than desirable.

I have emphasized this point so that readers will know that the 114 book is truly first hand work. Unfortunately, native opinions and interpretations could not be given in the Aboriginal language for the printing cost would be prohibitive, but some of them will be published elsewhere. I have, however, discussed with the author all the statements and interpretations attributed to native informants, and the translations of texts, and am satisfied that we are presented with a reliable record of intelligent native thought and belief. Mr. Berndt's own opinions are only expressed, and then sparingly, at the conclusion of chapters, and in the final chapter. Also, Mr. Berndt was able [123] to check with his wife the women's attitude to, and part in, the ritual, and their knowledge of doctrines. Only a woman worker can observe and inquire into this satisfactorily. Mrs. Berndt, therefore, provides a further assurance of the reliability of this record.

For these reasons, as well as for my own special interest in the subject matter and in the region and because of my close association with Mr. Berndt in his anthropological research, I commend this book. It is a most important contribution to our knowledge of Australian Aboriginal religion, a contribution which will be increased by a study of the Djanggawul cult, now in process, which, like the Wauwalik, preceded the Kunapipi in north-east Arnhem Land.

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June 24, 1949.

A. P. ELKIN.

PREFACE

The main purpose of this work is to indicate some fundamental
features of an Australian Aboriginal religious cult, the Kunapipi, in 121
one particular area. North-eastern Arnhem Land has been selected,
not because it presents a more exotic background or more spectacular 794
ceremonies, but because the cult as seen here is fairly well
defined, and because its religious concepts are important and significant
to the people concerned. In this region there are several
fairly well integrated religious cults, having a common theme and
fundamental intent. Most of them, however, have complex local
associations, whereas the Kunapipi ceremonies, which have been
introduced into north-east Arnhem Land, belong to a configuration
which is still widely diffused throughout the Northern Territory.

The plan is to examine the cult as seen in this one region, to consider
its relative importance in adjacent areas, and so prepare the 121
way for a more intensive analysis of it in the central-western part
of the Northern Territory. Although introduced, the Kunapipi has 177
become closely associated with more truly north-east Arnhem Land
mythology, in particular, the Wauwalak, which is used to explain it;
but the Wauwalak mythology itself was at some time diffused into
north-eastern Arnhem Land, apparently from the same direction as
this much later ritual.

The Kunapipi songs of Yirrkalla (in north-east Arnhem Land)
have been derived from those commonly in use further south. By [533]
examining relevant songs and mythology of adjacent areas, it is
possible to trace the movement and diffusion of this cult from one
group to another, and to discuss (for instance) the source of the
Yirrkalla Kunapipi. This is not really difficult, for the Kunapipi (in
all the regions mentioned in this work) possesses the common theme
of a Great Mother, expressed as either a single or a dual personality, [776]
her power being extended to her daughters, the Wauwalak,
Ka'lerika'lering or Mungamunga. She is said to be responsible for the
constant fertility of human beings and other natural species, and the [842]
continuing sequence of the seasons, as well as for the general similarity
of her ritual, emblems and songs. In addition, certain "key"
words, which are sacred, are used widely to designate ceremonies, [192]
objects and sacred beings.

What does this cult mean to its postulants? Why does it exist? 771
What do the people themselves believe that they are receiving from 794
it? Its basic intent seems to express the latent or conscious desires of 796
121
773

121 the individuals who combine to form the social group that carries
773 out these ceremonies. And if this be so, does the cult adequately fulfil
the wishes of the people, or do they feel that something is lacking?
794 All this raises a variety of problems, of which only a few can be
796 treated here. But to understand Aboriginal religion, its belief and
rites, it is essential to have thorough knowledge of the mythology
771 and songs of at least one particular cult. It is not enough merely to
observe rituals performed on the sacred ground, and then to theorize
from such observations; for Aboriginal sacred ritual is an acting out
of mythology, and mythology, in turn, is recorded in elaborate and
detailed song cycles which enshrine the meaning and significance of
the ritual. Therefore, conclusions can be reached only after an analysis
of these three aspects: ritual, mythology and song. This implies
that the doctrines, intent and function of a specific religious cult,
such as the Kunapipi, may be derived from analysis of the mythological,
historical and present-day data available to the field-worker,
especially as the cult is still a functioning element in the life of the
people. From these we may arrive at some general conclusions concerning
121 the essential nature of Australian Aboriginal religion. Such
771 conclusions, however, do not necessarily provide a basis for interpreting
"primitive" religion generally, nor a peg upon which to hang
theories relating to the origin of religion. Indeed, it is unwise to
describe Australian Aboriginal religion by that controversial and
dubious term, "primitive". Aboriginal religious concepts, like those
of Europe, have been changing through the ages in association with
the cultural needs of the people. In the process, Aboriginal religion
has developed into a mature and vivid faith, mediated through
beliefs and rites, and giving to its adherents a deep satisfaction and
happiness.

The whole question of Australian Aboriginal religion needs far
121 more consideration than has been accorded it to date;[1] but before
771 any reliable theoretical studies can be made, it is essential that anthropological
794 field-workers should provide considerably more data than
are at present available. Here, in this volume, is a study of one religious
cult. But it should be kept in mind that this work deals with
only one cult in one region, with reference to its diffusion in adjacent
areas; other cults exist side by side with the Kunapipi, and still
others are found in various parts of Aboriginal Australia. Whether
all these cults are basically similar, and have a common intent and
function within the separate native cultures, or whether they are
fundamentally dissimilar, has yet to be determined.

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[1] E.g. E. Durkheim, *Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, Paris, 1912; H. Hubert and M. Mauss, *Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice*, *Mélanges d'histoire des religions*, Paris, 1909; R. H. Lowie, *Primitive Religion*, New York, 1924; G. Róheim, *Australian Totemism*, London, 1925, and *Animism, Magic, and the Divine King*, New York, 1930; P. Radin, *Primitive Religion, Its Nature and Origin*, New York, 1937.

Several aspects should perhaps be mentioned in this *Preface*, 121
since they throw new light on the study of Aboriginal religion.

Throughout the greater part of the Northern Territory the con- 771
cept of a Fertility Mother is found. She is the direct or indirect 776
inspiration of all religious thought and activity. She is the central
theme of the Kunapipi ceremonies. Indeed, Kunapipi is one of her
sacred names. Her "eternal" presence throws new light on the
philosophy of totemism in the region, for it was she, herself without
a totem, who brought the totems into being. Animals, birds, rep-
tiles, Spirits, inanimate objects, physiographic features, became
totemic through her divine influence and association, or because they
served some purpose in relation to her "eternal" rôle of creator,
cause of birth and rebirth and seasonal fluctuations. In the Kunapipi
then, the totem bears the sacred imprint of its religious or mytho-
logical connection with the Mother. In this region, therefore, the
study of totemism is a means to an end: and that end, where we have
any detailed knowledge, is the Mother herself, existing as a divine Being
serving as an explanation of religious thought, belief and behaviour.

This leads to the realm of the sacred, but the problem of the
demarcation between the sacred and the profane, and of the part
played by women in sacred ritual, particularly in the Kunapipi
itself, needs to be considered far more intensively than is possible here.

Religious thought and action permeate the whole of an indigenous 121
society, and are not manifested only on the sacred ceremonial ground
when groups meet for the performance of ritual. Therefore, it is 771
sometimes difficult to separate the sacred from the profane. A man 778
or woman does not receive sacred power directly or indirectly from
the Sacred Mother only on the ceremonial ground, through the per-
formance of ritual. He, or she, possesses innately a sacred or divine
essence, which exists apart from any external coercion: whatever
his or her degree of participation in the sacred collective rites, this
personal germ of sacredness remains intact, and cannot be destroyed
even by death. It seems probable however that this individual germ,
which may perhaps be described as a person's own sacred aura, may
be intensified on the occasion of religious ceremonies. The spirit of a [774]
man (or woman) is derived directly from the Sacred Mother; his
bones themselves are possessed of a sacred quality, being likened to
the *rangga* emblems associated with the great ancestral Beings; and
he himself bears "inside" (sacred) and "outside" (secular) personal
names, which are in many cases of sacred origin.

Women have a far greater part to play in sacred religious cere- 121
monies than has hitherto been observed. This is particularly the case 562
in north-eastern Arnhem Land; and in the performance of the Kuna- 771
pipi they are directly responsible for the efficacy of a whole series of 796
ceremonies. Because they do not take part in all the rituals of a
particular cult, this does not mean that they are excluded or are

121 consequently irreligious. Woman, or more precisely her unique
562 ability to create, together with man's power to inseminate, has
771 become a feature of native religion in these areas, crystallized in the
796 concept of the Mother, whom we see manifested in (for instance) the
[831] Kunapipi. The aura thus surrounding, and radiating from, this
[776] Fertility Mother has been extended in some degree to native women to-day.

Another problem arising from the study of the Kunapipi cult
121 which needs detailed consideration, is that of individual origins.
794 Throughout the greater part of the Territory, specific cults have been inspired either by one or, in some cases, by two or three Ancestral
773 Beings. Through their own personality and power, it is said, they succeeded in indoctrinating the whole social group in which they
776 found themselves. They brought with them what appear to have been new ideologies, with attendant ritual, emblems, songs, and mythology in which they themselves now play a dominant part. This individual aspect is apparent in the case of the Kunapipi Mother, who arose from the waters of the Roper River Mouth (*vide* Chapter XI), bringing with her the main features of what we now call the Kunapipi cult. The same principle is evident in the appearance of the Djanggawul (*vide* Chapter I) and of Laintjung (Chapter I) in north-eastern Arnhem Land; both these Beings appear to have inspired virile cults, substantiated by mythology which details their adventures, their activities and beliefs. The society itself, of course, must have been more or less receptive to the introduction of these religious beliefs. That is to say, the religious leader, whether Kunapipi,
[182] Laintjung or the Djanggawul Brother or Sisters, was able to impress his (or her) own point of view on that society, which in turn was willing to adopt his views and ideas, so giving social impetus to the introduced religion.

This aspect of individual origins, in relation to specific Australian Aboriginal cults, is an important one. The contention, which may be substantiated by mythology and the traditional song-cycles, is that a powerful personality—such as the Great Mother, the acknowledged spiritual leader and inspiration of the Kunapipi cult—possessed of ability beyond the ordinary, can and does exert his or her influence on the society in which he is either temporarily or permanently living; and that influence, helped by favourable circumstances, is sufficient to establish a cult which attracts adherents, and becomes in its own right an important social function and institution.

121 The migration of Ancestral Beings, like Kunapipi and others, into
771 a particular society, bringing with them a religious cult, is a fairly
773 general phenomenon in Aboriginal religious life. Major Ancestral
794 Beings very rarely arise in the country of the people with whom they
776 are mythologically associated, or in the society which serves as the "incubator" for their specific ideology. Rather, the individual (in

the guise of an Ancestral Being) is the proselytizer, the carrier of the 121
germ of a religious idea, which is adopted by, and modified to suit, 771
the social group in which he finds himself. Whether he brought with 776
him the ingredients of that religion from his own "home", or whether 794
it took shape in consequence of his contact with the alien people, is a 773
matter for conjecture.

The diffusion of Aboriginal religious cults, such as the Kunapipi, 177
also presents some interesting features. A certain amount of more or
less "pure" evangelization has occurred in this respect; individual 794
cult leaders, of both historic and contemporary society, have been 797
interested in furthering the activities of the cult. But in their successful and unsuccessful attempts to introduce their particular beliefs into other groups, they take only the basis of their cult life, and do not as a rule attempt to superimpose their own cultural ideas and organization. In north-eastern Arnhem Land, for example, the Kunapipi,
recognized by natives themselves as an introduced theme, has been [182]
fairly well integrated with existing social organization, religious life,
and secular beliefs; even its mythology has been altered to meet the demands of local ethics, while the alien songs are interpreted in the light of indigenous criteria. Nevertheless, the basic ideology and construction of the Kunapipi cult remain: and it is this aspect which
really concerns the proselytizer. The same process may be observed [171]
in other regions, such as western Arnhem Land, the Daly River-Port Keats area, and west-central Northern Territory.

* * * *

A word should be said concerning the presentation of Kunapipi 128
Song Cycles (that is, in Chapters VII, VIII, X, and XI). Their value lies in their substantiation of the cult's doctrine, explaining its outward expression in ritual and in the use of ceremonial emblems and objects. Such traditional songs ensure that the original intent of the cult is not lost or radically misinterpreted. To-day, however, misinterpretation is possible as a result of conflicting loyalties arising from the contact of Aboriginal with European culture. In order to restrict ourselves to the literal interpretation of these songs, it has been found necessary to present them with an interlinear translation, a general rendering, and a brief commentary based on native interpretation: this method makes available the maximum amount of
data. The phonetic script used conforms to that of the International [104]
Phonetic Association,[2] amended for use in Australia by Dr. A. Capell.[3] [126]

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[2] G. Noel-Armfield, *General Phonetics*, 1931, pp. 21-23. *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, "A Preliminary Report of Field-Work in the Ooldea Region, Western South Australia", *Oceania Bound Reprint*, Sydney, 1945, pp. 262-264, or *Oceania*, Vol. XV, No. 1, pp. 50-52.

[3] A. Capell, *Methods and Materials for Recording Australian Languages*, Sydney, 1945 (reprinted from *Oceania*, Vol. XVI, No. 2, pp. 144-176). Since the complete phonetic script was not available for rendering native words in this volume, some equivalents in ordinary English lettering have been used.

114 Anthropological field-work was carried out by the writer and his wife in the Northern Territory between the years 1944–47, and in north-eastern Arnhem Land in 1946–47. The Ma:ra and Alawa material was obtained from informants on the Northern Territory Army Settlements in 1945, at Larramah, Mataranka, Manbulloo (Katherine), Adelaide River and Darwin; work in west-central Northern Territory and the Daly River region (mention of which is made incidentally in this volume) took place between 1944–46. In the north-eastern Arnhem Land region, in particular, our work was carried out primarily through the medium of the local dialects.

122 For the greater part of this field-work we were under the aegis of the Australian National Research Council, and the Department of Anthropology, University of Sydney, while the writing up of this work was made possible by a Research Grant from the Research Committee of the University of Sydney.

000 As this is not a comparative study of Aboriginal religion throughout Australia, no attempt is made to evaluate the material of previous field-workers who have written on this subject, and the reader will find little reference to their work in the following pages. Nevertheless, the works of O. Siebert, C. Strehlow, A. W. Howitt, B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, A. P. Elkin, L. Warner, P. Kaberry, G. Rôheim, M. F. Ashley Montagu, T. G. H. Strehlow and others should be consulted, should the reader be interested in the subject.[4]

The writer wishes to acknowledge the continued help, encouragement and advice of Professor A. P. Elkin, of the Department of Anthropology, University of Sydney, and the assistance of his wife, Catherine H. Berndt, in preparing the manuscript for publication. His greatest debt however rests with the native informants who supplied the data from which this volume was compiled. The only tangible recompense they may hope to receive is that readers will 000 gain a greater insight into their religious faith, and through that knowledge will manifest a sympathetic and practical understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal problems.[5]

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[4] A. W. Howitt, *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, London, 1904; C. Strehlow, *Die Aranda und Loritja Stämme in Zentral Australien. Mythen, Sagen, und Märchen des Aranda-Stammes in Zentral Australien*, Gesammelt, von Carl Strehlow, Bearbeitet, Von Moritz von Leonhardi; Frankfurt, 1907 1921; E. Eylmann, *Die Eingeborenen der Kolonie Südaustralien*, Berlin, 1908; O. Siebert, *Sagen und Sitten der Dieri und Nachbarstamme in Central Australien*, *Globus*, Vol. 97, 1910; B. Spencer, *Native Tribes of the Northern Territory of Australia*, London, 1914; H. Basedow, *The Australian Aboriginal*, Adelaide, Chapter XXVII; G. Roheim, *op. cit.* 1925 and 1930, "Women and Their Life in Central Australia", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 63, 1933, pp. 207 265, *The Eternal Ones of the Dream*, New York, 1945; L. Warner, *A Black Civilization*, New York and London, 1937; M. F. Ashley Montagu, *Coming into Being among the Australian Aborigines*, London, 1937; B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, London, 1938; A. P. Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines*, Sydney, 1938, and "Studies in Australian Totemism", *Oceania Monograph No. 2*, Sydney; P. Kaberry, *Aboriginal Woman, Sacred and Profane*, London, 1939; T. G. H. Strehlow, *Aranda Traditions*, Melbourne, 1947; E. A. Worms, Religiose Vorstellungen und Kultur einiger nordwestaustralischer Stamme in funfzig Legenden, *Annali Lateranensi*, IV, 1940, S. 268.

Vide also articles in the journal *Oceania*, issued by the Australian National Research Council of Sydney.

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[5] Further fieldwork on the above and related subjects was carried out in 1949–1950 at Oenpelli, western Arnhem Land, and at Milingimbi, north-central Arnhem Land, by the writer and his wife. The Kunapipi cult was witnessed in operation and carefully discussed; while fundamental issues are essentially the same, a number of regional variations were noticed, particularly in reference to song cycles. These will be incorporated later in a further volume on Kunapipi ritual and ideology. 114

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[for caption, see category 116, p. x]

PLATE II.

[facing p. xxxii]

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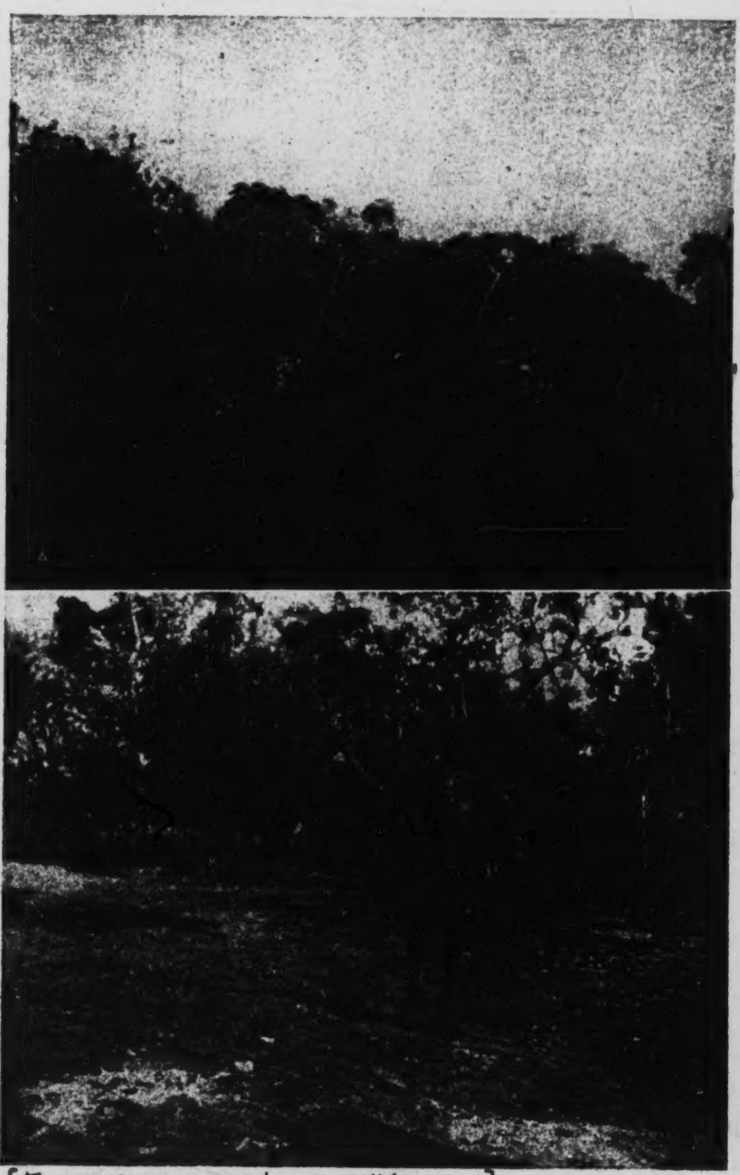
[291]



[For caption see category 116, p. x]

PLATE III

[Facing p. 1]

CHAPTER I

THE CULTURAL PATTERN OF NORTH-EASTERN ARNHEM LAND SOCIETY

a. The Geographical Background:

The main centre with which we shall be dealing here is Yirrkalla, 131
in the far north-eastern corner of the Arnhem Land Aboriginal
Reserve. The surrounding area is thickly wooded, with jungles and 133
mangrove swamps, fresh water streams and tidal rivers, long 137
beaches broken by sheer cliffs, and occasional islands fairly close to
the shore.

Yirrkalla itself takes ~~its name~~ from a fresh water creek that flows [103]
into the surf beside a long white curving beach. This creek drains a
wide area of lagoon and swamp, its source far back in the hilly
inland. Wide grass flats, easily inundated during the monsoonal [132]
rains, and dense jungles, lie in the back country not too far from the
coast line. At Yirrkalla the Methodist Overseas Mission established 797
a station some eleven years ago: and now a Mission house on a low
cliff dominates the beach, where native huts, mostly of cast-off [342]
European timber and tin, are arranged in rows. Beyond the Mission [177]
house, on a smaller beach, are other huts; and a church, store-house,
dispensary and garden complete the settlement.

This Mission station is the centre for natives whose traditional 131
home camps are at Blue Mud Bay, Trial and Caledon Bays and Port
Bradshaw to the south, facing the Gulf of Carpentaria, while visitors 797
come from Groote Eylandt, Woodah Island and Rose River. The
Yirrkalla local groups belong mainly to Cape Arnhem, Bremer
Island, Melville Bay, and the English Company Islands, as well as
to Arnhem Bay: but natives from the Wessel and Elcho Islands,
Milingimbi in the Crocodile Islands, and from the mainland to the
west, do visit this region. Yirrkalla is thus a strategic base for [122]
anthropologists and missionaries who desire to contact members of
various groups of a more or less similar cultural and linguistic background.

Geographically speaking, the Yirrkalla groups are comparatively isolated, for to-day only the Mission lugger calls at this depôt, with occasional visits by other Europeans who come by boat and 'plane. Yirrkalla is approximately 500 sea-miles east of Darwin, 130 miles

131 from the Church Missionary Society settlement at Groote Eylandt,
797 and 90 miles from the nearest Methodist Mission at Elcho Island.
Apart from the Mission stations of Roper River, Oenpelli, Goulburn
Island, Milingimbi, Elcho Island, Yirrkalla and Groote
Eylandt, which fringe the great Reserve, there is no other European
settlement, except the new base subsidized by the Northern Territory
Native Affairs Branch at Ambu Kambu on Groote Eylandt.

136 The whole region is rich in indigenous foods and resources, particularly
along the coast. The sea abounds in dugong, turtle, fish,
262 crayfish, shellfish, oysters, and crabs: inland, on the plains and in
the jungles, there are wildfowl, emu, wallaby, kangaroo, and smaller
animals, fruit, nuts, vegetables, berries, and a large variety of other
bush foods, with quantities of fresh-water fish and crocodiles in the
streams and rivers; and at times buffalo which have wandered eastwards
from the Buffalo Plains west of Oenpelli. So plentiful is the
food that, even in bad seasons, the quality may diminish, but rarely
the quantity.

b Social Organization :

114 Before proceeding to our main study, it is necessary to outline
briefly the structure of north-eastern Arnhem Land society. The work
184 of Professor Lloyd Warner is the most reliable in this respect, while
the Rev. T. T. Webb and Dr. Donald Thomson have written on the
121 subject.[1] The reader will find sufficient detail in these for our present
177 purpose. But it should be borne in mind that the organization of
Yirrkalla society, although basically similar to that of Milingimbi,
is in many respects decidedly different. Dr. Warner viewed aboriginal
social life through the eyes of Milingimbi informants, influenced
by cultural trends from Cape Stewart and the inland, while the
present writer views the same position from the Yirrkalla point
of view, uninfluenced to any marked degree from the west, but
responding to contact from aboriginal groups to the south and
south-west (this is particularly apparent in our study of the Kunapipi
cult).

These people of eastern Arnhem Land, from Cape Stewart to
101 Blue Mud Bay, had a general term for themselves—the Wulamba
group of clans, forming a tribe with a more or less common cultural
background: natives outside this region, such as those at Groote
Eylandt, called them the "Balamumu" confederacy. Balamumu may
614 be broadly translated as "those of the sea", that is, coastal people.
197 The varying dialects (termed *mata*, "tongue") of these clans (*mala*)
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[1] L. Warner, *A Black Civilization*, New York and London, 1937; T. T. Webb, Tribal Organization in Eastern Arnhem Land, *Oceania*, Vol. III, No. 4, pp. 406–411; A. P. Elkin, Marriage and Descent in East Arnhem Land, *Oceania*, Vol. III, No. 4, pp. 412–416; D. Thomson, *Interim General Report of Preliminary Expedition to Arnhem Land, Northern Territory of Australia*, 1935–36, Department of Interior, Canberra, 1936, pp. 31–34.

are collectively known as Mi:woitj *mata*. Throughout the whole area 614 the territory is divided between a number of clans, some of which 618 have become extinct, while others have had their population seriously 197 diminished. These clans have allocated to them certain *mata* (or linguistic groups), which may be interchangeable between clans belonging to the same patrilineal moiety. There is a pronounced emphasis on the importance of the *mata*, each of which exists as an almost independent unit. Again, many of these *mata*, like the *mala*, have become extinct or been absorbed by more powerful groups. They are of patrilineal descent, but there is a strong tendency for a person to feel some attachment to the *mata* and *mala* of his mother and mother's brother. These *mata* and *mala* belong exclusively either to the *dua* or to the *jiritja* moiety, and there is no variation in the use of these terms throughout the whole area.

The moiety is the most important control in the social organiza- 616 tion of the Wulamba bloc: it divides all *mata* and *mala*, the whole life of the people and the known universe, into two groups, and affiliates all those belonging to one moiety. The moieties are exogamous, so that they remain the basis upon which marriage rules depend. All the *dua* people, for example, are *dua'kundit* (i.e. of one family) and the *jiritja* people, *jiritja'kundit*. This division of the people into moieties is said to have begun in the Eternal Dreaming [773] Period, when the Djanggawul Beings removed from their uteri the first male and female predecessors of the present-day groups. Although Djanggawul themselves were *dua*, they were able to define the two moieties in their progeny. But Laintjung, being the chief *jiritja* Ancestral Being and a contemporary of the Djanggawul, assumed also the responsibility for establishing the *jiritja* moiety. The esoteric significance of the terms *jiritja* and *dua* is to-day unknown, although old and reliable aborigines state that both these moiety terms convey the meaning of metamorphosis: that is, they refer to a state of transition from the period in which the great Ancestral and Spirit Beings lived (i.e. the Totemic era), to the development of man as he is in this age.

These people also have a term, *jutu'indi*, which refers to all *dua* and *jiritja* people together, and not merely to a tribe consisting of both moieties, as the Wulamba. *Jutu'indi* is the concept of moiety unity, and may be loosely translated as "beginning"; for the people themselves say, "it is *jutu'indi* because, if I'm *dua*, *jiritja* is my mother, *dua* my daughter and son, and we are all one. . . ." But *jutu'indi* refers principally to members of inter-marrying *mata*, and not always [614] to *mata* in outlying areas: that is, it is apt to have a restricted connotation.

Another interesting aspect of these moieties is that the *dua* seems to be associated with the ancient and purely indigenous belief, ritual and ceremony of the people, while the *jiritja* is concerned more

616 with introduced or external themes. The Djanggawul[1] and Wauwalak
[776] Spirit Beings, the guardians of the most sacred and esoteric ritual,
are *dua*, while Laintjung, Baijini, Macassan and Badu mythology,
[773] ritual, songs and belief are *jiritja*.[2]

As we have said, the *mala* and *mata* belong either to one moiety
614 or to the other; but detailed topographical maps of the region
197 reveal that clan territories are very elastic, so that isolated sites
relating to one moiety may exist in the clan country of the opposite
616 moiety, and so on. Further, the traditional home territory of one
[423] group may be situated elsewhere than it is to-day. This is often discovered only by analysis of clan mythology and its relationship to that of other clans, and the inclusion of linguistic groups in clans which originally were not associated with these particular *mata*. The whole study of clan and linguistic group organization is extremely complicated. We shall, however, mention several of the best known of these, in order to demonstrate their complexity: it is not necessary, for the purpose of this work, to deal with them in any detail.

Dalwongu is a *jiritja mata*, that means "Spring water flowing after
614 rain and the swamp bird, *wanba*, calling out when he sees it". It
616 belongs not only to the Nungulrulpoi (meaning "a shoal of *gunbirawi*
young mullet") whose alternate name is Numbiripala (meaning
192 "those who subincise", that is, they are influenced from Rose River: *vide* the body of this work), or Malar'watjeri (i.e. "the clan of the subincision"), but to others. These particular Dalwongu are distinguished from the others by the "heavy" quality of their language. Allied to this Dalwongu *mata*, within this particular *mala*, are the Kalaulwun (meaning "the *wanba* bird in the bamboo tree") and Mararba (that is, "the *wanba* bird") *mata*, who belong also to other *mala* and not only to the Nungulrulpoi. The alternate term for the *mala*, Malar'watjeri, is used also as a separate *mala*, and its *mata* are Dalwongu, Bilmalandji ("paperbark near the salt water") and Di:agoi (meaning "paperbark"): this Dalwongu group is allied to the first, and to the other *mata* which are rightfully Malar'watjeri.

Another Dalwongu group belongs to the Ngelkala *mala* (meaning

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[113] [2] *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, Sacred Figures of Ancestral Beings of Arnhem Land, *Oceania*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, pp. 309–326, 2 plates and text figures; Secular Figures of North-Eastern Arnhem Land, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 51, No. 2; R. Berndt, A Wonguri-Mandjikai Song Cycle of the Moon Bone, *Oceania*, Vol. XIX, No. 1, pp. 16–50; Badu, Islands of the Spirits, *Oceania*, Vol. XIX, No. 2, pp. 93–103, plate; C. Berndt, Expressions of Grief Among Aboriginal Women, *Oceania*, Vol. XX, No. 4, pp. 286–332; R. and C. Berndt, Discovery of Pottery in North-Eastern Arnhem Land, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVII, Part 2; A. P. Elkin, R. and C. Berndt, *Art in Arnhem Land*, F. W. Cheshire, Melbourne, and University of Chicago Press, 1950; R. Berndt, *Djanggawul*, for publication (a detailed study of the Djanggawul religious cult of north-eastern Arnhem Land); R. Berndt, *Daughters of the Sun* (a further study of the Djanggawul cult from the north-central Arnhem Land point of view), for publication; R. and C. Berndt, *Arnhem Land, Its History and Its People* (F. W. Cheshire, for publication); R. Berndt, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land* (sexual behaviour in north-eastern Arnhem Land), volume for publication.

"a mangrove barramundi"), whose home is around Blue Mud Bay. 614
Ngelkala is a "new" name, while the old term is Numburula, mean-
ing "a barramundi springing up after small fish". Still another 616
Dalwongu ("light" language) belongs to the Manaitja ("the wild 192
honey bee"); another belongs to the Biringal *mala* (that is, "grass shooting out from a pool of water"), but is now allied to the Ri:tarngu (meaning the same as Biringal) *mata*; and another to the Mandji:kai ("sandfly") *mala*, being thus allied to a number of other *mata*.

Ri:radjingu is a *dua mata* (meaning "a long horizontal white cloud"), whose *mala* is Wururul ("from the blowfly"): it is allied to the Ba'rangu ("a white cloud") whose *mala* is Miliwuru (also a "white cloud"). The Ri:radjingu join, but are not directly associated with, the Kalpu *mata* ("the small *miliga* moon-fish") and Marakulu *mata* ("the *dandei* bark from the *durilji* gum tree"). The Kalpu are really Kaulwu:rl *mala* ("a bushy-topped spear-wood tree"), allied to the Djarlwak *mata* (associated with the spear-wood tree): alternate names for this *mala* are Mamari:n ("the spear-wood tree") and Djamunda ("little moon fish about the reef"). Marakulu *mata* is usually allied to Wurungguku ("the cry of the *wiriei* pigeon"), Marangu ("*durilji* gum bark"), Kopateiindamiri ("spear stick from the *durilji* tree") and Lultma'rangu *mata* (that is, "look down to the Marangu"), who belong to the Durilji *mala* ("sapling of a gum-tree"). Another Durilji group has the Dapingu *mata* ("pigeon"). Moreover, Marakulu, Marangu, Lultma'rangu and Kopateiindamiri *mata* can be Da:poingu (not Dapingu) *mala*, and Ri:radjingu, Kalpu, Ngeimil ("lily root") and Gwo:la mala ("salt-water catfish") *mata* can also join in.

This gives some idea of a few of the *jiritja* and *dua mala* and *mata*, 614
together with the meanings of the terms which are directly and
indirectly associated with the clan mythology, totemism and ritual 616
life. "Inside" or sacred names are used also to refer to the clans;
these, too, are associated with the ritual life, and are used only on the [778]
ceremonial ground in a special form of what are known as *bukalilji* (*jiritja*) or *bukali* (*dua*)—sacred invocations to the main Spirit Beings.

Each clan (or each linguistic group), or series of clans (or of *mata*), shares in a common mythology, and undertakes particular ceremonies associated with this. Each clan, too, has access to a number of waterholes, some of which are sacred; and each is guardian of sacred *mareiin* (an "outside" or camp term) or *rangga* ("inside" or sacred term) ceremonial objects, and of *nara* ceremonies. Frequently the members of both moieties unite to perform the *nara* of one clan (or *mata*), but the real ownership is rarely disputed.

Certain *mata* are more closely allied by ties of marriage than are others, and each *mata* has definite *mata* of the opposite moiety with which it prefers to arrange marriages.

This is the fundamental basis of Yirrkalla, and north-eastern

614 Arnhem Land, social organization: the division of society into two
616 groups (that is, moieties) was, with the kinship structure, the traditional norm. But within recent years the sub-section system has been introduced from the south and south-west, coming up the coast
[177] through Rose River and Blue Mud Bay. In the Milingimbi region it seems to have been introduced at an earlier date, through contact with the inland tribes, particularly the Reinbaranga. At Yirrkalla, however, the sub-sections are not yet completely co-ordinated with the kinship terminology, and among the older people are not in constant use. Certain sub-section terms are however mentioned from time to time in this work, in reference to Ancestral Beings; they will not be discussed in this context, and reference should be made to the work of L. Warner, T. T. Webb, A. P. Elkin and R. Berndt.[3]

c The Religious Quality of Yirrkalla Social Life:

222 Yirrkalla society, like most other Australian Aboriginal communities, whether of desert, hill or coast, must forage for its food, the
796 abundance of which depends on the particular environment. On the
789 north coast and rivers of Arnhem Land, food of many varieties is
771 available in great quantities. In spite of this, however, its constant supply is said to depend on the rhythm of the seasons, upon the mythical characters of the Eternal Dreaming Period, and on the performance of associated ritual and ceremony. In order to ensure a constant supply of food, in the form of natural species generally, these aborigines rely on the great ceremonial cycles of *djunggawon*, *kunapipi*, *ngu:rlmak*, and the *dua* and *jiritja nara* cycles which are usual in this region. These rituals, associated with the principal Ancestral Beings such as Djanggawul, Wauwalak, Laintjung, Banaitja and Baijini, are the basis of indigenous religion. But they are not concerned merely with the provision of food. Their purpose
[842] is, primarily, to ensure the continuation of the human species; the increase of all other animals, birds, fish, vegetable matter, and so on, is only an adjunct to the main theme.

This religion then is a dominant quality in Yirrkalla life, and is
771 reflected in all its institutions and conventional forms of behaviour.
794 It concerns itself with the fructification of all living things, and in that category human beings themselves are considered the most
789 important. As, however, the Kunapipi cult is especially concerned with their rhythmic sequence of birth and rebirth, it is crystallized in a definite concept of a Fertility Mother. Moreover, the cult is concerned with the coming and going of the seasons, the appearance and disappearance of vegetable and plant matter, and the propaga-

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[3] *Vide* L. Warner, *op. cit.* 1937, pp. 116–124, and his Morphology and Functions of the Australian Murngin Type of Kinship, *American Anthropologist*, n.s. 33, 2, 184; T. T. Webb, *op. cit.* pp. 406–408; A. P. Elkin, *op. cit.* pp. 412–416; R. Berndt, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land*, Chap. I.

tion of other natural species—all phenomena which are necessary for 771
the continuance and well-being of the people themselves. In keeping 789
with this doctrine, a natural development has been the stress on procreation
—the importance of pregnancy and child-birth, and the 794
essential sequence of sexual intercourse and conception, expressed [842]
particularly in ritual and long song cycles.

In order to understand Kunapipi cult life and belief, it is necessary to summarize very briefly some of the other cults which flourish beside it in this area.

The Djanggawul myth, consisting of several hundreds of lengthy 773
songs, relates the adventures of two men and two women, who in
the Dreaming Period landed at Port Bradshaw, on the north-east [533]
Arnhem Land coast. They had journeyed across the sea from an island called Bralku, now known as the *dua* home of the dead, somewhere beyond Groote Eylandt. These Ancestral Beings are known generally as the Djanggawul, but had their own personal names. The leader was Djanggawul himself; the two women were his sisters, the younger Maralaitj, and the older Pildjiwuraroiju; and their companion was Bralbral, who plays only a minor part in this
great cycle. In their canoe they brought a large conical *ngainmara*
mat, which is now used particularly by the women, and also certain [778]
sacred *rangga* sticks possessing life-giving qualities. The mat symbolized
the uterus; the *rangga* sticks were penes, and when not being [831]
used ritually, were kept hidden in the *ngainmara*.

As the Djanggawul journeyed along the coast, they met other
Ancestral Beings like Laintjung and the Baijini, and Spirits such as
Pomapoma, Kultana, Woijal, Burulu-burulu and others; but none [776]
of these had the procreating powers of the great Djanggawul.
Djanggawul had an elongated penis; and his two sisters had long
clitori which dragged on the ground as they walked. Djanggawul had [831]
sexual relations with his sisters, so that they were continually pregnant.
From time to time, at the camps where they stayed, he would lift their clitori to one side, and put his hand up into the uteri to remove many children of both sexes: these were the ancestors of the
present aborigines. The song cycle features the perpetual pregnancy 773
of the two sisters, their uteri being likened to the *ngainmara* mats
which they brought with them, while the people who are removed 533
from them in childbirth are the *rangga*. It is said that a person's
bones are like *rangga*, inherited from both the father and mother, [827]
who in turn inherited theirs through the generations of ancestors,
right back to the Eternal Times of Djanggawul and the creative
heroes. Therefore, at death, a person's material remains, as well as
his spiritual substance, must be treated with respect, and surrounded [764]
by ritual.

An important aspect of this myth, second only to the theme of 773
fertility, concerns the institution of sacred ritual. In the beginning, 796

773 so it relates, the Djanggawul sisters themselves were the sole guardians of the religious objects and associated ceremonies. They were
796 well acquainted with all the sacred ritual and doctrine, because this intimately concerned them; the symbols they used, and their actions in dancing, made reference to the sexual act, to pregnancy and birth. Aboriginal men to-day speak definitely on this point: "Then we had nothing: no sacred objects, no sacred ceremonies, the women had everything." So one day, the myth continues, the men stole the women's objects while they were out collecting mussels; they took them back to their own camp, and there performed the special sacred dancing. The Djanggawul sisters, coming back with their shellfish, found that their *rangga* had disappeared. They heard, in the distance, the singing of the men; and finally they decided that perhaps it was just as well that the men had taken their *rangga*. It would save them a lot of trouble, they agreed; now the men could carry out most of the ritual for them, while they busied themselves chiefly with raising families and collecting food. In this way, their true function as Fertility Mothers became established. Such an attitude is not con-
[171] fined to north-eastern Arnhem Land, but appears in the mythology of other Australian Aboriginal tribes. However, women still play
[562] an important part in sacred ritual, for instance in the Kunapipi.

This is a brief summary of the complete version, which gives in
616 detail the main theology of the *dua* moiety. To both *dua* and *jiritja*
796 men and women it is of major importance, for men of both moieties take part in the *dua nara* ceremonies, although *dua* men alone are the leaders, singers and principal dancers. The Djanggawul ritual is concerned with "higher" religious thought, and most of it with sacred dancing on a sacred ground where a *nara* "shade" or hut has been constructed. This hut represents the womb; in it the *rangga* are stored, and from it men emerge, to posture and dance ritually while holding them.

616 If the Djanggawul are important to the *dua*, Laintjung and his son Banaitja are equally so to the *jiritja* group of clans who hold the
773 *jiritja nara* ceremonies. The Male Ancestral Beings Laintjung and Banaitja, with certain female counterparts, dominate *jiritja* religious ideology; but their mythology is not nearly so vivid as that of the Djanggawul, nor are their ceremonies so important. Laintjung came from the sea near Blue Mud Bay, and established his cult. There, and at nearby places, he distributed sacred totemic designs to *jiritja* clans; he had also brought with him sacred *rangga*, the *jiritja* "high" totems, which he gave into the custody of the clans. Although much
[189] of the Laintjung ritual also relates to the increase of the natural species, most is only indirectly related to fertility.

When his father died, Banaitja desired to broaden and put into practice some of Laintjung's religious concepts; but his efforts aroused general antagonism, and at last he was put to death. Later,

however, the people to whom Laintjung had given his sacred designs 616
and *rangga* were sorry for what they had done, and made the "likeness" 773
of Banaitja in paperbark bound on a framework of cane. The
influence of Laintjung and Banaitja, in spite of their importance, did [171]
not cover such a wide area as that of some other Ancestral Beings;
and the aborigines account for this by explaining that Banaitja
"was killed at an early age, before he had the opportunity of travelling
widely throughout this region".

Most of the great religious myths of this region are associated
with the *dua* moiety, the more conservative section; it is the *jiritja* [177]
which embraces new and "alien" ideas and activities. From time to 773
time, fully-initiated *dua* and *jiritja* men are shown the "high" 616
rangga, and through the years they become increasingly familiar
with the complex ritual. This admission to sacred knowledge, however, 561
is not thought comparable to an initiation or age-grading 796
ceremony: it is more in the nature of a revelation through which
they become acquainted with the inner substance of religious thought
and expression. The *dua* Wauwalak myth, on the other hand, is of
general importance, and is associated with the three sacred "age-grading"
ceremonies of this north-eastern region. There is also much
sacred ritual not concerned with age-grading. Both *dua* and *jiritja*
men take part in this, and it incorporates some purely *jiritja* songs [533]
belonging to separate cycles.

The two Wauwalak sisters are associated with the concept of 773
fertility, owing mainly to their connection with birth, after-birth 796
blood, and menstruation. The latter receives a great deal of attention
in Yirrkalla thought. Aboriginal women are all potential [841]
Wauwalaks; and a great deal of their behaviour, particularly at
puberty, and when menstruation ceases at pregnancy, is said to be
based on that of the Two Sisters. The Wauwalak myth is most
important to these north-eastern Arnhem Landers, and they make
frequent references to it. It has, as mentioned, far more general
application than have the Djanggawul and Laintjung cycles; and the
three separate ceremonies which concern it here are each of a different
nature. The commonest is the *djunggawon*, used primarily for
initiation; ideally, it extends over a couple of months, and includes, [881]
in addition to circumcision and camp dancing, a certain amount of
ritual which is not fully revealed, as in the case of the Djanggawul.
The second of these three ceremonies is the *kunapipi*, which will be
dealt with in the following chapters. The third is the *ngu:rlmak*
ceremony, performed to-day only at rare intervals. It is considered
to be far more important than either the *djunggawon* or the *kunapipi*,
but less so than the Djanggawul and Laintjung *dua* and *jiritja nara*
rituals.

There are also a number of subsidiary ceremonies, related in some degree to these two main cycles, but not by any means so outstanding.

Before turning to our main study, we may mention briefly the
778 presence of material emblems and symbols in religious life. This
532 north-eastern culture, far more than those to the south and south-
west, pays great attention to the outward expression of religious and
esoteric ideology, both as a guide to ritual behaviour, and as a means
of impressing certain concepts on the minds of neophytes. In addition
to copies of the *rangga* introduced by Djanggawul, Laintjung and
others, there are many beautifully made *rangga*[4] relating to various
totemic objects and natural species, as well as to human organs and
ancestral people, used constantly as "high" *rangga* in the *nara*
rituals. They are often stylized, made from various hard woods,
cane or paperbark, bound with jungle-fibre twine, painted with clan
totemic designs, and ornamented with colourful feathered strings.
There are also human figures, carved from blocks of wood, and
decorated in the same way. In the Wauwalak ceremonies many other
sacred, *mareiin*, objects are used: the *uwar* drum of the *ngu:rlmak*, the
jelmalandji "posts" and forked stick *djepalmandji* of the *kunapipi*, the
julunggul trumpets and dancing posts of the *djunggawon*. There are
also bark paintings, with sacred totemic clan designs, used on the
ceremonial ground, or with copies of chest drawings.

All these, for the aborigine, are concrete expressions of his
771 religious concepts; they prepare his mind to accept the essence of
778 sacred dogma, and to grasp its significance. As symbols, they keep
alive for him the reality of traditional belief. Faith is essential for
182 social cohesion, giving meaning and sanction to behaviour patterns
177 and institutions; its presence has been far more apparent in Aborigi-
nal societies throughout Australia than in contemporary European
groups. The majority of these aborigines, before contact, believed
implicitly in the essential goodness of their own way of life; all was
explained, each member of the community had a definite place in the
scheme of things, and the future was well determined. To-day, how-
177 ever, the native on the fringe of European culture finds that social
182 conditions are changing, his accepted beliefs have been sharply
questioned, and an alien ideology is being more intensively enforced.
771 His ceremonies are performed less frequently, his great song cycles
sung less fervently, and his sacred objects and paraphernalia are
gradually losing their meaning and function. The cohesive and
integrating qualities of his religion and mythology are weakened,
and finally destroyed. The balance of his own cultural structure, with
all its apparent weaknesses and inconsistencies, is upset by intensive
external pressure and "civilizing" influences. No longer is the pattern
of his life determined by a traditional code. Instead, he discovers
himself to be relying more and more constantly on alien beliefs and
ideas; but owing to the suddenness of the change, and his inability

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[4] *Vide* A. P. Elkin, R. and C. Berndt, *Art in Arnhem Land*, F. W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1950, illustrated.

to adjust himself immediately to the new ways and actions, these fail 177
to satisfy his needs, and so he becomes frustrated and unhappy. 182
We are, however, principally concerned here with the aborigines' 771
adjustment to their own indigenous religion; and within this field we have selected one particular cult, the Kunapipi, which has wide implications and seems to be diffused over the northern part of the Northern Territory.

CHAPTER II

KUNAPIPI, THE SACRED CULT

171 794 Throughout Arnhem Land, and the Northern Territory south of Yirrkalla, around and below the Roper River; west across the plains and swamps of the Buffalo country to the Daly River, and beyond, towards Port Keats and Timber Creek, and further west into Western Australia; south-west into the central cattle country around Victoria River Downs, Wave Hill, Gordon Downs, towards Hall's Creek in the Eastern Kimberleys; through inhospitable desert regions around Tanami and the Granites, and eastwards across the main North-South Road; through the tribal territories of groups with differing cultures and language—the sacred name of Kunapipi is known.

The Kunapipi Cult is diffused over an immense area, and is known sometimes by alternate names; but though its rituals and ceremonies may differ in some minor points, and its doctrine may vary, its intent remains fundamentally the same, and its background is similar throughout all these areas.

In north-eastern Arnhem Land, the name Kunapipi expresses a dual concept: on the one hand it refers to a Fertility Mother, or Mothers, and on the other to the great Rainbow Snake. This is the symbolism of the Uterus and the Penis, natural instruments of fecundity. In other areas, such as the Daly River, or central-western Northern Territory, the term Kunapipi (although still known) changes to Kalwadi, or to Kadjari, translated into English as "Old Woman", or described as "Mother belonging to you and me". In the north-western and central-western regions of the Northern Territory, more stress is placed on the concept of a Fertility Mother, and less on the Rainbow Snake. In the Milingimbi region, when discussing the Kunapipi,[1] Professor Lloyd Warner accentuates the importance of the great Rock Pythons who swallowed the Wauwalak Sisters, but overlooks the underlying significance of the Two Sisters as Fertility Mothers.

171 776 794 773 Throughout the areas mentioned, a basic feature of Aboriginal religion is the belief in an Original Mother (or Mothers), herself a Creative Being and the essence of fertility and abundance. In western Arnhem Land the Mother is the inspiration and sponsor of the *u:ba:r* (equivalent to the north-eastern Arnhem Land *uwar* of the

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[1] L. Warner, *A Black Civilization*, 1937, pp. 290–311, and 372–375.

ngu:rlmak ritual) and *ma'railn* cults;[2] on Bathurst and Melville Islands 171
the Earth Mothers are said to have brought into being the human 776
and natural species, and to have introduced their system of social
organization. The now virtually extinct Laraki:a shared this same 794
cult; and so did the Daly River people who built circular stone 773
structures to symbolize the wombs of their creative Mothers.* The cult of Kalwadi is still strong in the north-western quarter of the Territory; as the Kadjari, it spreads down to the central-west, where it is met by another Kadjari cult from the Tanami-Granites desert, and the Billaluna region in Western Australia.

This Mother[3] is always present behind the ritual, the dancing and the singing. She is a symbol of the productive qualities of the earth, the eternal replenisher of human, animal and natural resources; it was from her uterus that human and totemic beings came forth. She has no totem herself, nor is she a totemic concept; she does not herself perform totemic ritual, although her neophytes do. In these areas, she is the background of all totemic ceremony, an "eternal" explanation and symbol of the Aboriginal way of life, with its continual expectation of rebirth.

In her sacred mythology she may be alone, or may appear as Two Sisters; or, in some areas, the Two Sisters may be described as her daughters. For example, from the Roper River westwards, through the Victoria River district into Western Australia, her daughters are the exotic and beautiful Mungamunga, representing an ideal of young aboriginal womanhood. Although the Mungamunga are themselves associated with their Mother in sacred ritual (see Chapters X and XI), they do not play an important part; they are concerned principally with secret magico-religious ceremonies of women, and with love magic of both sexes.

The Mother herself, Kunapipi, Kalwadi or Kadjari, is represented in certain parts of the mythology as a perpetually pregnant woman, who in the Dream-Time let out from her uterus human beings, the progenitors of the present natives. She was responsible too for sending out spirits of the natural species from season to season, to ensure their continual increase. In this she did not act entirely alone, but in association with a Rainbow Snake, the symbolic Penis, which completed the dual concept. This aspect is particularly important, for it reflects the part played by the male in fertilization.

In a remarkable series of drawings from central-western Northern

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[2] *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land* (volume to be published by the Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, New York), Chapter IV, Sections I to VIII.

*Knut Dahl, *In Savage Australia*, London, 1926, pp. 233-4, figs. 9-10 This writer records stone structures in the vicinity of the Mary River, in "Buffalo country", west of the western Arnhem Land fringe.

[3] *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, The Eternal Ones of the Dream, *Oceania*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, pp. 67-78, illustrated (3 plates).

171 Territory,[4] artists depict human beings, as totemites, flowing from
794 the uterus of the Mother into the round "ring place" (or ceremonial
ground) for the performance of sacred rites. The "ring place" is
773 itself the uterus of the Mother. To-day, in the really important sacred
776 ceremonies, a special ring place is used for the performance of these
rituals. As the neophytes leave the camp for the sacred ground, they
[778] themselves are said to become increasingly sacred, and to enter the
Mother; they go into her uterus, the ring place, as happened in the
beginning. When the ritual is completed the Mother "lets them out";
they emerge from the ring place, and pass once more into ordinary
life. These ring places vary in shape from place to place, but all symbolize the Mother's uterus. The sacred ceremonies associated with
this Fertility Woman are called in pidgin English "Big Sunday",
[778] inferring a sacred atmosphere from the European connotation of the
word Sunday, while the term refers also to "sandy place", the soft
ground upon which the sacred dancing is performed. The appellation
"Big Sunday", in some regions, may also be derived from the term
"Centre" place, which refers to the sacred ceremonial ground.

All Kunapipi ritual, irrespective of region, has thus a common
796 theme. We find in it the return to the Mother's uterus, and the
794 eventual emergence, when the postulants come out from their sacred
ritual refreshed, and as "new" men (that is, it is like a "rebirth"):
771 this symbolic enactment of birth brings with it a renewal of ideals,
energy and faith. Fertility and the supplying of food, sexual pleasure
831 and satisfaction, solidarity within the group, and an undividing
faith in the divine truth of the cult—all these elements are present.
Food and sex, fundamental in human life, and consequently in
religion, owe their continuance, it is said, to the Eternal Mother.
It is not surprising that people living in such close proximity to
nature, with few artificial distractions, should recognise the fundamental importance of female fertility, and see in it a central theme of
religion.

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171 In north-eastern Arnhem Land, the Kunapipi cult is not yet
deeply entrenched, since it has been introduced within comparatively
794 recent times. Its earliest infiltration took place through the Reinbaranga (sometimes termed Rembranga, and localized in south-
177 western Arnhem Land) and Burera tribes and so into Milingimbi,
where Professor L. Warner witnessed some of its rituals twenty years
ago. From this centre it spread westwards towards Goulburn
Islands and Oenpelli,[5] and eastwards to Elcho Island and Arnhem
Bay. But it does not seem to have gripped, at that time, the imagina-

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[4] *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, *op. cit. Oceania*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, Plates I to III; and R. and C. Berndt, Aboriginal Art in Central-Western Northern Territory, *Meanjin*, Spring, 1950, pp. 183–188, ten plates.

[5] R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Section IX.

tion of the people further east, around Yirrkalla, Cape Arnhem and Caledon Bay. 171

It was not until perhaps fifteen years ago that the cult gradually 794 spread northwards from Rose River, where its custodians were the 177 Nungguboiju group who had obtained it from the Roper River people, particularly from the Mangarei-Ma:ra-Alawa tribes. The Lultma'rangu (*dua* moiety), Dalwongu and Mararba (*jiritja* moiety) linguistic groups were the first to come within its influence; they mixed with people from Rose River to perform Kunapipi ceremonies around Caledon and Blue Mud Bays, and occasional Kunapipi rituals were held round about Yirrkalla.

But although these people did perform the Kunapipi at relevant 171 seasons, this did not take the place of indigenous religious belief and 177 practice. The great ceremonies of the *dua* and *jiritja* moiety *nara* were still the most important; and the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak* rituals, 616 associated with the two Wauwalak Sisters and the Rock Pythons, 794 retained their importance in the minds of the north-eastern people. 796 Kunapipi in this area was subsidiary, whereas in most of the other areas mentioned above her rituals held a paramount position.

The introduced Kunapipi cult brought with it all its attendant 177 ritual and ceremonial activity, but apparently its original mythology (see Chapters IX and X) became merged with that of the Wauwalak.[6] 184 It was, in consequence, more readily accepted by the local people, 773 for the Wauwalak myth-cycle embraces much of the indigenous religion. Thus, instead of becoming just another introduced ceremony, 794 the Kunapipi became a cult associated with a series of cults, having 796 roots in indigenous mythology. The Wauwalak mythology had much in common with that of the southern Kunapipi. Both possessed the same concept of fertility. The Wauwalak sisters became indirectly the dual Mothers, continually replenishing the earth with human beings and with the natural species. [776] Even the Rainbow Snake was presnt, i e the form of the Rock Pythons, who finally swallowed the Sisters. Fundamentally, too, the arrangement of the sacred dancing ground, and much of the incidental ceremony (when the special Kunapipi objects are not used) are similar to those of the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak* rituals.

One aspect of the Kunapipi is slightly at variance with local 773 indigenous belief. In north-eastern Arnhem Land the Fertility 776 Mothers are the sisters of Djanggawul, Pildjiwuraroiju and Miralaitj. The Wauwalak, although associated with the idea of fertility, are not 184 concerned with human or animal creation: they are said to be the 794 daughters of the elder Djanggawul sister, removed from her uterus by her Brother. According to conventional Kunapipi mythology,

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[6] The Wauwalak mythology itself was introduced much earlier into north-eastern Arnhem Land, its original source being found in the mythology of the Kunapipi: *vide* Chapters IX and X.

184 the Mother (or Mothers), represented quite often by Two Sisters
even in central-western Northern Territory, is the creative Being;
773 so from this point of view the Wauwalak cycle, now substantiating
776 the introduced Kunapipi, should possess Two Sisters who are themselves
creative Beings. Local belief however accords this status only
794 to the Djanggawul; but since the Wauwalak are their daughters, the original doctrine is not greatly inconvenienced. The creative Mothers may still be the Djanggawul, making their appearance through the Wauwalak Sisters, while the Wauwalak themselves are the Munga-munga of the south.

The actual meaning of the name Kunapipi is not easy to discover.
773 The cult itself, with its relevant ceremonies, and the myth that sub-
794 stantiates the ritual, is Kunapipi, and this, in most areas mentioned
796 above, is translated as the "Mother", or "Old Woman". The term
"old" in this context signifies status and age, although not elderly
appearance. Dr. Warner[7] notes that Kunapipi (spelt "Gunabibi") is
[114] one name of the Pythons which swallowed the Wauwalak; but, as mentioned above, this writer stresses the importance of the Snakes at the expense of the Fertility Mothers, and this element is by far the most apparent in north-eastern Arnhem Land religion.

192 At Yirrkalla, the name Kunapipi is said to have two meanings.
304 First, the word Kunapipi means "whistle-cock" (that is, a sub-
831 incisure): for these ceremonies came up from the Rose and the
[171] Roper Rivers where subincision is general, whereas throughout the greater part of north-eastern Arnhem Land only circumcision is practised. The ceremonies of Kunapipi in the Yirrkalla region may also be termed *wiri:i* or *wira'i*, meaning "incisure". But Kunapipi means also the uterus of the Mother. That is, the incised penis symbolizes the snake (Python or Rainbow Snake), and the incisure itself the uterus. Symbolically, then, the subincised male member represents both the female and the male organs, essential in the process of fructification.

More generally, however, the term Kunapipi is said to mean the Mother, and in isolated cases the Snake, both being accepted versions. It is because Kunapipi is translated as Fertility Mother, through the greater part of the Northern Territory, that we have preferred to use that appellation.

A number of ceremonies throughout the northern half of the
794 Northern Territory are associated with Fertility Mothers and Rain-
796 bow (or Great) Snakes; and it is possible that the majority of these
cults are linked with one another, even if their outward expressions
184 are dissimilar. This aspect requires intensive study, including the collection of mythological texts, and analysis of relevant ritual and songs. The Kunapipi cult, however, consists of certain distinctive elements, that are found throughout the areas we have mentioned.

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[7] L. Warner, *op. cit*, p. 294.

For example, the Kunapipi held at Yirrkalla is essentially similar to 184
that held at Birrundudu (towards the Western Australian border in
central-western Northern Territory). There is the spasmodic use of 794
bullroarers; the sacred ground itself is the uterus of the Mother; a 796
sacred well (*nanggaru*) is dug on the dancing ground; a crescent-shaped
trench (*kanala*) is made later; *jelmalandji* "posts" are
erected, immense structures symbolizing the Pythons; there is the
exchange of wives and gifts, with ceremonial intercourse; and the
forked posts, called the *djepalmandji*, are used towards the termination
of the rituals. These are features of all Kunapipi, Kalwadi and
Kadjari ceremonies.

A word may be said too of the songs that are used in the Yirrkalla- 184
Rose River Kunapipi Cycle.[8] These are mostly of the short conventional 184
type common throughout most of Aboriginal Australia,[9] and 533
their words serve as "key" patterns suggesting and inferring ideas, 794
rather than providing detailed description. This form of song 796
structure is, like the Kunapipi, alien to north-eastern Arnhem Land,
where usually songs are very lengthy, description is detailed and
repetitious, and separate cycles contain several hundreds of songs
(or verses). Secular and magico-religious *tjarada* love songs, which
are often associated incidentally with the sacred Kunapipi (for they
are sometimes connected with the Mungamunga), have also found [177]
their way up through Rose River to north-east Arnhem Land, and
have retained their own song-structure against much local opposition
from semi-indigenous forms.[10]

The major theme in all Kunapipi ritual is the natural cycle of 794
reproduction and fertility. Fertility, as expressed in reproduction,
seasonal fluctuation, periods of plenty and scarcity, is symbolized 796
in the ceremonies associated with animals, birds and plants, their 831
mating, copulating and bearing offspring in their proper seasons.
The essential factor of mating and copulating, as a step towards 776
reproduction, is crystallized in ceremonial copulation on the sacred
ground. And ever present, "eternally" watchful and omnipotent, is
the Great Mother, the essence of fecundity, in whose divine power
rests the strength to animate and increase both human beings and
the natural species. The performance of rituals attracts her interest,
and brings into motion her protecting influence, which ensures a
continuation of the world that her neophytes know, and the unbroken
sequence of the seasons upon which they depend for their livelihood.

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[8] *Vide* Chapters VII and VIII of this work.

[9] R. Berndt, A Wonguri-Mandjikai Song Cycle of the Moon Bone, *Oceania*, Vol. XIX, No. 1, pp. 16-50.

[10] *Vide* R. Berndt, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land*. In this work a Rose River Love Song Cycle and the *tjarada* are detailed and discussed.

CHAPTER III

MYTHOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE KUNAPIPI

773 The myth that substantiates Kunapipi ritual in this north-eastern
region is thus concerned with the two Wauwalak sisters; and this
796 same myth (as mentioned in Chapter I *c*) serves to explain two other
794 indigenous rituals, the age-grading *djunggawon* ceremony, and the
"higher" religious ritual of *ngu:rlmak*. Each of these three ceremonies,
[561] the *djunggawon*, the *kunapipi* and the *ngu:rlmak*, emphasizes some particular feature of this myth. But at the same time, to understand thoroughly the Kunapipi ritual and symbolism it is necessary to be acquainted with the complete Wauwalak myth. Even then, certain aspects must be interpreted, according to Aboriginal explanations, before their meaning can become apparent. Traditional symbolism in ritual, through long years of constant repetition, becomes so stylized that the original intent is sometimes obscured; it is often necessary, therefore, to interpret on the basis not only of mythology, but also of comparison with similar actions and symbols in other regions. However, in this small study we are concerned not so much with theoretical analysis, as with recording the structure and basis of the cult in this particular area, assisted by a glance at its expression in two neighbouring groups.

In north-eastern Arnhem Land, where most of the indigenous
[616] religious doctrine is expressed through the Djanggawul *dua* and the
[184] Laintjung-Banaitja *jiritja* cycles, the Wauwalak series is not the most
important. Again, to understand fully the importance of this concept of fertility it is necessary to realize the place of the Djanggawul Brother and Sisters in Yirrkalla sacred life, for they were responsible in the first place for the birth of the Wauwalak. The power of fructification, however, has been transmitted to the Two Wauwalak Sisters (*vide* Chapters I and II) with the introduction of the Kunapipi.

It is relevant to mention, in this context, that women play an
562 important part in all sacred ritual in north-eastern Arnhem Land,
794 where many of the rites are concerned with the reproductive function
796 of womankind, and of female Ancestral (or Spirit) Beings. Women
to-day are acquainted, although in many cases somewhat imperfectly,
773 with the background of sacred ceremony and the underlying
doctrines. Indeed, men stress the fact that in the Dreaming Period
women initially possessed all sacred ritual, and lost it only through

the men's duplicity. This is particularly apparent in the Djanggawul 562
myth (*vide*, for example, Chapters I and IV). Merely because they do 773
not join in certain of the most sacred mysteries, women do not feel
"left out" of things, or pushed aside into what has been termed by 794
some writers a profane existence, with attendant feelings of inferi- 796
ority. On the contrary, they realize that they have a supplementary
function in maintaining camp dancing, and answering the men's
ritualistic calls from the sacred ground. It is necessary, for instance,
that they prepare food for the men at such times, and observe certain
tabus. A woman must know her own totemic clan songs, inherited [424]
from her father, and to a lesser extent those of her mother, and be
able to sing them on appropriate occasions. She must know the
correct dance movements and steps to accompany the men's singing
in the "outside" ceremonies, as well as in the sacred rituals where
she has her own part to play. There is no jealousy of the men's
performances alone on the sacred ground. The men, so women say,
are performing these ceremonies not only for themselves, but for all
the people in general. This is simply a normal extension of the [462]
sexual division of labour and activity.

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The story of the Wauwalak is rarely told in prose by a story-teller 533
of this region. Usually it is transmitted from one group of men to
another, through the generations, in ritual, accompanied by explana- 773
tions, on the ceremonial ground. Moreover, the whole myth is
related in the sacred "inside" Wauwalak cycle of some hundreds of
songs, in two main series: the "inside" Bush cycle, and the "inside"
seaside cycle, each describing in detail the adventures of the Sisters.
There are also the "outside" (secular) Bush and seaside cycles, sung
in the main camp to the dancing of women: these continue the story,
and reveal many aspects of the myth. Each one of these songs is
representative of the very best in native poetry,[1] which it is not
possible to set down in the bare general translation presented here.

The Wauwalak myth begins in a region usually unidentified (*vide* 171
Chapter IX), said vaguely to be somewhere south in the "Bush".
This means, perhaps, that the Wauwalak sisters came from the direc- 773
tion of the Roper River, the hypothetical home of the Kunapipi 776
Mother and her two daughters, the Mungamunga. In any case, the
Wauwalak came northwards at an early period, towards the main-
land opposite the Crocodile Islands (that is, near Milingimbi),
bringing with them the rituals of the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak*.
Then the myth itself became to some extent localized in northern
Arnhem Land. It is on the mainland south of Milingimbi that the
most sacred totemic sites connected with the Wauwalak are found;

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[1] This is reserved for a detailed study of the Wauwalak Cycle in relation to the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak* ceremonies.

171 and it was to this region, apparently within historic times, that the
773 Kunapipi found its way and finally became established. On the
eastern side of Arnhem Land we hear little of the local travels and
776 adventures of the Wauwalak: all the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak* ritual of that area is inspired by the myth which centres around this country near Milingimbi. One version only, endeavouring apparently to weld the Wauwalak mythology more closely to the Rose River Kunapipi, relates that the Two Sisters came up from the Roper River through Nungguboiju territory to Rose River, and continued directly up the coast to Kararwu, at Arnhem Bay.

773 The Wauwalak sisters, one older and one younger, left their home territory, the land of the *dua* Wauwalak people. Before leaving, the elder sister had incestuous relations with a clansman, and as a result she became pregnant. She was called *gungman* (that is, a mature child-bearing woman), while the younger girl, or *wirlkul*, was *kalngawona* (that is, having no child). They travelled in the direction of Muruwul (or Mu:ruwol) sacred waterhole, naming all the animals, birds and plants. Both of them carried stone spears, and wore decorative head-bands of feathered string and cane armlets: the younger sister, the *wirlkul*, wore a breast girdle of woven fibre, which fitted under her shoulder blades and her swelling breasts. They walked along, killing iguana, opossum, bandicoot, bush rat and kangaroo for food, and collecting yams. As they gathered these, placing them in their large *bulpul* dilly-bag, they said, "You will be *mareiin* later on". That is, the animals, yams, and so on would become sacred: they would be *rangga* objects, and be commemorated in ceremony.

The women came at last to Gru:awona, and the younger sister said: "We'll have a rest here".

"All right, sister", replied the other. "I feel my baby moving inside, and it will soon come out."

They made a fire and rested there. A little later, this elder sister
[616] gave birth to a female child, who belonged to the *jiritja* moiety, although because of the incestuous union its father had been *dua*. They remained at this place, but the afterbirth blood was still flowing when the elder sister was walking about.

When she was well enough to move, they continued their journey towards Muruwul, which was not far from the sea-coast. The afterbirth blood was still running when they reached the sacred tabued well (or waterhole), and a trail of blood drops had been left all along the track. At Muruwul they made fire, and took some food from their dilly-bag for cooking.

First they placed an opossum on the fire to roast; but as soon as the creature began to grow warm, it got up and ran away. Then they tried to cook a bandicoot, but this too rose from the fire and ran away. The iguana and the rat, and all the other animals, did the same.

Now, in the sacred waters of Muruwul waterhole lived the great *dua* Julunggul Rock Python, called *jindi'ba:pi* (big snake), who was the "headman" of all the animals, birds and vegetables: this is the Rainbow Snake, common to the greater part of Aboriginal Australia. The sex of this particular snake is not always defined; but Julunggul is usually (not always) said to be a female, with alternate names like *witi:tj, goingaru, bandei'jindi'mirawa,*[2] *gundaru,* and so on. Other snakes of both sexes were also living at Muruwul. (The fact that a female snake eventually swallowed the Two Sisters does not affect its role as a Penis symbol.) The animals which the Wauwalak tried to cook knew that Julunggul was nearby, and that the women were "desecrating" her waterhole by dropping afterbirth blood around it and eating food in the vicinity: the animal food, by coming close to the sacred well, had assumed sacredness also (that is, become *mareiin*), and was tabu to these women. They understood too that there was "big business" (that is, sacred ritual paraphernalia) in the well, and that the women should not have camped near it but gone further away. Leaving the fire, therefore, they ran to the well and jumped in, becoming future *mareiin* ceremonial figures, and sacred *rangga* objects for ritual use. By leaving the women in this way, they tried to indicate that the well was tabu, and that it was against the religious code to cook or sit near it. But the women did not realize the mistake they were making.

Two small edible snakes, called *gundaru* like the Julunggul, but really *gulpanwa* (yellow snake), also ran away and jumped into the well.

"What's wrong, sister?" the Wauwalak asked each other.

Then they tried to roast the yams; but instead of running away as the other food had done, these fell into ashes as soon as they were placed in the fire. "They just made themselves ashes": that is to say, their spirits had left the fire, and gone to the sacred well.

"What's wrong?" they asked again. "Something happen here? All the animals and yams have disappeared. We can't understand it. What will we do? We sleep here?"

"Ah, yes", said the elder sister. "We'll sleep here."

"What's that?" The *wirlkul,* thinking she had heard a noise, looked in the direction of Muruwul well.

"That is a very deep well", said her sister. "We'll sleep nearby."

But the *wirlkul* had really heard the movements of Julunggul, emerging from the depths of her subterranean home. All the totemic animals, reptiles and vegetables, jumping into the well, had disturbed her; and she could smell the afterbirth blood of the elder sister. She lifted her head from the water, with nostrils quivering, smelling the odour of pollution.[3] Then, holding her head higher,

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[2] A term used by the Mo:ru and Ba'ralba'ral linguistic groups of the Wessel Islands.

773 she sprayed water outwards and upwards to form many rain clouds.

The two sisters, who were sitting down, saw these clouds forming into one, threatening rain. But they did not suspect that Julunggul had sent them.

"You had better get some stringy-bark, so that we can make a hut", said the *gungman* to her sister. "It's going to rain."

"All right, sister"; and the younger went out to cut sheets of bark. The older sister was still not strong enough to do any heavy work.

After the *wirlkul* had made several journeys, bringing back sheets of bark, the two constructed a simple hut; they lit a fire in the doorway, and went inside to rest. By this time it was sunset, and the rain began to fall, washing the coagulated blood from the ground into the sacred well. The Julunggul stirred in discomfort, seeing the streaks of blood on the surface of the water.

When it was dark, Julunggul emerged again from her well; holding high her head she spat out lightning, one vivid flash after another, until the Wauwalak crouched together in fear, calling out at each flash. (This lightning is said to have been different to that normally seen; but the women didn't know it was caused by the Snake. "They thought it was from cloud.")

After the lightning, the Julunggul slowly and deliberately came out of the well, dragging her sinuous body. But at first, pleased that the lightning had finished, the Wauwalak did not see her.

Gradually the Snake drew nearer to the cleared place around the bark hut, her eyes protruding like great lights searching out the women. Then suddenly the Wauwalak saw the Julunggul, and began to cry out.

"What are we going to do?"

"We'd better dance to keep her away."

So the *wirlkul* began to dance, to hinder the Snake's progress. She moved gracefully, shuffling her feet, swaying her body from side to side, and holding in her hands feathered string from which she made cats-cradles as she danced. This particular dancing is called *keiweijun*, for as the girl danced she called out *kei'wa! kei'wa!* (Go away! Go away!)[4] The Julunggul stopped in her course, and watched the dancing. But the girl grew tired, and called out: "Come on, sister, your turn now: I want to rest".

The older sister came from the hut, leaving her child in its cradle of soft paperbark, and began to dance. But her blood, still intermittently flowing, attracted the Snake further; and she moved towards them.

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[841] [778] [3] In contradiction to this, menstruation and afterbirth blood is usually described as *mareiin*, or sacred, and so could not "pollute" the well. There is the suggestion that the snake found the blood attractive. This concept will be discussed later in a detailed study of the Wauwalak.

[4] *Vide* R. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Sections IV, V and VIII.

"Come on, sister", cried the *gungman*. "It's no good for me; my blood is coming out, and the Snake is smelling it and coming closer. It's better for you to go on dancing." 773

So the younger sister continued, and again Julunggul stopped and watched; but as the snake looked, her eyes were still focused on the entrance to the hut, and from time to time she breathed out flashes of lightning. In this way, the Wauwalak took it in turns to dance; when the younger sister danced, the Snake stopped; but when the older one continued, she came forward again. So the younger girl danced longer than the other, and as she swayed from side to side the intensive activity caused her menstruation to begin; then the Python, smelling more blood, came forward without hesitation.

Frightened, the Wauwalak ran into their hut, and with the baby, sat waiting inside. Slowly Julunggul drew nearer, twisting her body all round the outside of the hut, and put her head into the aperture. Seeing the women and the child, she sprayed them with saliva (called *ngeiakngeiakma*) from her throat, to make them very slippery; this covered their bodies, so that their skin became soft and easy for swallowing. Then Julunggul opened her mouth and swallowed first the baby, then the mother. As the elder sister was being swallowed, even when only her head and breasts were protruding from the Snake's mouth, she called out *kei'wa ! kei'wa !* But the Snake took no notice; she turned to the *wirlkul* and swallowed her too.

Then Julunggul slowly returned to Muruwul well; she entered it, and stood erect, with head upright and high out of the water. Beside this female Julunggul was her husband, also Julunggul, who had stayed in the well. They both belong to the Li:alauwermiri linguistic group.

These Snakes are so high that they can see all over the country—right down towards the Crocodile Islands and Cape Stewart; away into the interior of Arnhem Land, out to Elcho Island, the English Company Islands and the Wessels, to Arnhem Bay and Cape Arnhem, and down towards Port Bradshaw, Trial Bay, Caledon and Blue Mud Bays, even as far as Rose River. Out on the Wessel Islands at Guluma, they could see two other Rock Pythons, *wirikri* and *kaiambul*, standing up erect.

"What is your language ?" these two asked the Snake who had swallowed the Wauwalak.

"We are Li:alauwermiri. What is yours ?"

"We are Ba'rangu."

Other *dua* Pythons also erected themselves, and the Li:alauwer- 773
miri Snakes asked them in turn what their languages were. There 616
were Ri:radjingu, Kalpu, Marakulu, Djarlwak, Wurungguku, 797
Marangu, Kopateiindamiri, Lultma'rangu, Dapingu, Ngeimil, Gwolamala, Djapu, Grutawatumiri, Djambarpingu, Dadawi and others.

773 All of these were linguistic groups distributed among certain clans.
616 "Ah, what a lot of languages we talk," said the Li:alauwermiri.
197 "But although our languages are slightly different, we all share the
same *mareiin* (*rangga* totemic emblems), and have the same ceremonies."

All the Pythons from the various *dua* groups called out ritually:
773 *'a: ! ko:kjei ! 'a: ! ko:kjei !* And the sound of their voices was like
thunder.

Then the Wessel Islands Python asked the Li:alauwermiri Julunggul, "What have you had to eat ?"

"I couldn't say", replied Julunggul.

"But you must tell me what you have had," insisted the other. The Li:alauwermiri was *gu'rungkngu* (that is, unwilling to answer correctly), and kept refusing to tell the other Snake. But at last the first Snake said: "I had a rock wallaby and a parrot fish."

"All right, I'll tell you what I had", the female Julunggul replied. "I had two nice little girls and a baby; they are in my body."

The others would not believe. They repeated, "We had a rock wallaby and a parrot fish."

"That is nothing", the Julunggul boasted, "we had those Wauwalak."

Then the Julunggul made a tremendous noise, called *muljulngo* or *du:ldo:n*, now part of the sound of the bullroarer. The two terms are now archaic.

* * * *

773 It is necessary to pause at this juncture, and comment on some of the aspects dealt with in this part of the myth.

114 In the first place, there are many versions of the Wauwalak myth,
831 but the most reliable of these are contained in the elaborate song
cycles. The above version, which is outlined only briefly and has a number of appendices, differs in several minor points from that set out by Dr. Warner,[5] obtained in the vicinity of Milingimbi. For example, the Wauwalak Sisters in his version had already a child when they reached the outskirts of Muruwul (there termed Mirrirmina), and the younger sister gave birth to a baby on the way; both children were male. It was said that menstrual blood polluted the sacred well; while the Rock Python itself was male, called the Big Father. The flood theme, after the swallowing of the Wauwalak and the conversation of the various *dua* Snakes, makes its appearance in other versions which are not appended here.

The fact that the Rock Python, in the version we outline, is female (called by informants *jindi'ba:pi*, big/snake, and not *jindi'ba:pa*, big father: *ba:pi* and *ba:pa* may perhaps have been confused in Warner's version) is an important point, for it stresses the aspect of

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[5] L. Warner, *op. cit.* pp. 250–259. Since working at Yirrkalla in 1946–47, the writer has carried out additional research at Milingimbi (1950) into the Wauwalak mythology and songs. Certain local variations are found there, which it is proposed to discuss later in some detail.

fertility: the female Julunggul is big (as if she were pregnant) from 773
having swallowed the Wauwalak. Aborigines say: "There are two
Snakes, both Julunggul. One of these smelt the afterbirth blood and 114
swallowed the Wauwalak: this was the female. The other was her 831
husband, who stopped back in the well". According to another
version, both take part in the swallowing.

Nevertheless the female Julunggul, entering the hut in which the Sisters were crouching, symbolizes a penis, and her entry into the hut "is like a penis going into a vagina". The whole process of swallowing is interpreted by natives as an act of coitus. "It is coitus which causes female fecundity, expressed indirectly through the presence of the Wauwalak, as a transmutation of the great Fertility Mother, Djanggawul (mother of the Wauwalak)." The swallowing, accompanied by lightning and rain, serves to bring about the wet season (monsoonal period), the period of growth, and the renewal of animal, bird and vegetable life.

Another important point is the spraying of the Wauwalak by the Julunggul, before swallowing, with a "slippery" salival substance. This saliva is called *ngal*, which is also used for semen (also *ju:tu*, a term used generally for a child): the Julunggul sprays out the *ngal*, like an ejaculation of semen (with her head in the women's hut; that is, "penis in vagina"), and then swallows them (that is, coitus). Now, in the *djunggawon* and *kunapipi* rituals, actors are painted with white paint called *ngal* (*buru* or *buluk*), signifying the Julunggul's saliva or semen (*vide* Appendix I).

The erectness of the Julunggul and the other *dua* Pythons is the result of the swallowing (interpreted by informants as an erect penis). It is said that Julunggul and the other Snakes retained their upright positions only "because they had swallowed the Wauwalak and the other meat".

The noise made by Julunggul, after telling the *dua* Snakes she had
swallowed the Wauwalak, was (as mentioned) part of the sound of 773
the ritual bullroarer (termed also *julunggul* or *julunggir*, and *mumuna*;
this latter is the "outside" secular word used for both the bullroarer 114
and the Snake, called "Lightning Snake". It is also one name of the
Kunapipi or Kadjari Mother; this aspect will be mentioned again in
Chapters IX to XI). The rest of its sound was obtained from the
noise made by Julunggul, when she first sent out lightning which
split a tree; the wood from which the bullroarer is made symbolizes
a piece of wood that sprang out when the lightning hit the tree. The
bullroarer is used principally in the Kunapipi ritual, although also at [534]
times in the *ngu:rlmak*; its sound is said to be a "very happy one",
for Julunggul has just swallowed the Wauwalak. On the other hand,
in the *djunggawon* ritual when the *julunggul* "wooden trumpet" is
blown, the "light" sound of *brar! brar!* signifies the Python's
swallowing.

773 114 Some confusion exists as to how the afterbirth blood fell into the sacred well of Muruwul. It is said by some that the older Sister went down to the well to obtain water for drinking, and the blood dropped in while she was bending over. Others declare that the rain washed the blood into the well. The Julunggul, however, first smelt the proximity of the Two Sisters, and then the blood of the older. They had, according to the most reliable version, been camped at a swamp surrounded with "cabbage" or "wild coconut" palms, not far from Muruwul. It was here that much blood fell; when the rain began, the blood was carried down to the sacred well. A number of songs deal with this aspect.

Julunggul, so aborigines say, resembles an immense coloured caterpillar, *dapal*, with similar features and body, but without its numerous [534] legs; the bullroarer is like this, particularly when it has been decorated with feather down fastened on with blood, and attached to a long cord of human hair twine.

* * * *

Since there are deviations in other Wauwalak versions, it is advisable to append the following two stories on the same subject; but the main theme is the same, and only the differences will be described in detail.

773 The two Wauwalak painted each other with boomerang designs[6] before the birth of the elder sister's child.[7] When it was born, with the help of other unnamed women, the two started off for Muruwul. On arrival there the older sister partially built a bark hut called *murlk* (a sacred name, for this is the term for the hut placed on the ceremonial ground in the *djunggawon*, *kunapipi* and *ngu:rlmak* rituals). Her afterbirth blood was still intermittently flowing. The younger sister had, in the meantime, hidden herself in the surrounding grass. When the *murlk* was finished she came out, and began to dance along the track leading to the hut and to the well: she skipped along, shaking branches as she danced, just as the women dance to-day in the secular *djunggawon* and *kunapipi*. Coming near the mouth of the hut, she shook the branches, threw them aside, and entered; she sat down in there with her sister, and her sister's daughter. At the same time, she felt her menstruation blood running inside her from her breasts to her navel, down into the uterus, and flowing out. This had been caused by her energetic dancing, the movement of her hips, buttocks and legs. She had danced, too, the dance of the "spring water", the running streams of rain-water during the wet season,

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[778] [839] [6] This design refers to the special boomerang used for ritual defloration (sometimes associated with ceremonial intercourse) on the Kunapipi ground; the Rose River Love Song Cycle treats this subject. *Vide*, also, Chapters IV and V.

[7] *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, Sacred Figures of Ancestral Beings of Arnhem Land, *Oceania*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, pp. 314-317.

and this symbolized menstruation blood. The latter is translated colloquially in this region as "spring blood", a menstruating woman being known, in translation, as a "spring woman". 773 [841]

There the two women sat, the younger menstruating, and the older with an intermittent flow of afterbirth blood.[8] It was at this time that Julunggul smelt the blood, emerged from the well to swallow the Sisters, and made rain. [844]

When the Wauwalak saw the rain clouds gathering, the elder sister said: "Well, young sister, you had better run down and get some paperbark so that we can finish this *murlk*".

"No, sister", replied the other. "I have the same as you (that is, blood flowing): it is a very happy time, for this is my first menstruation. It's not like you, sister, you know about it because you have had it before, but this is my first time. I'm not going to go from this hut. I'm going to look after your daughter, while you yourself go out for bark. You know, if I go it might run all over the place. I can dig a hole in the middle of the *murlk* and let my blood flow into it, then no one can see it."

"All right", agreed the older sister. She went out and collected more stringy-bark, and at the same time obtained yams and animals for food, as in the above version. She was able to collect these easily, for she had a good hunting dog called *Djirawa* (the name meaning, "a black cloud during dry weather time"). She returned to the camp with the food and bark.

They made fire and began to cook this food, but it all "flew" away in turn to the sacred well. The younger sister asked the other, "You know why all these animals have run away?"

"I don't know", was the answer. "There might be something in this place (that is, something sacred). Something might come along to our camp." It was at about this time that the Snake, who had been watching them, sent out lightning. . . .

The sequence of events int his version has been changed, but the final section conforms to the first story.

The next version is illustrated by a detailed drawing (see Plate VI and "key" text figure 1) depicted in red, yellow, blue, green and black crayon on brown paper,[9] a substitute for stringy bark, the normal medium, by two Ri:radjingu men named Mauwulan and Wondjuk (father and son), the former being the headman for the Wauwalak cycle. 773 532

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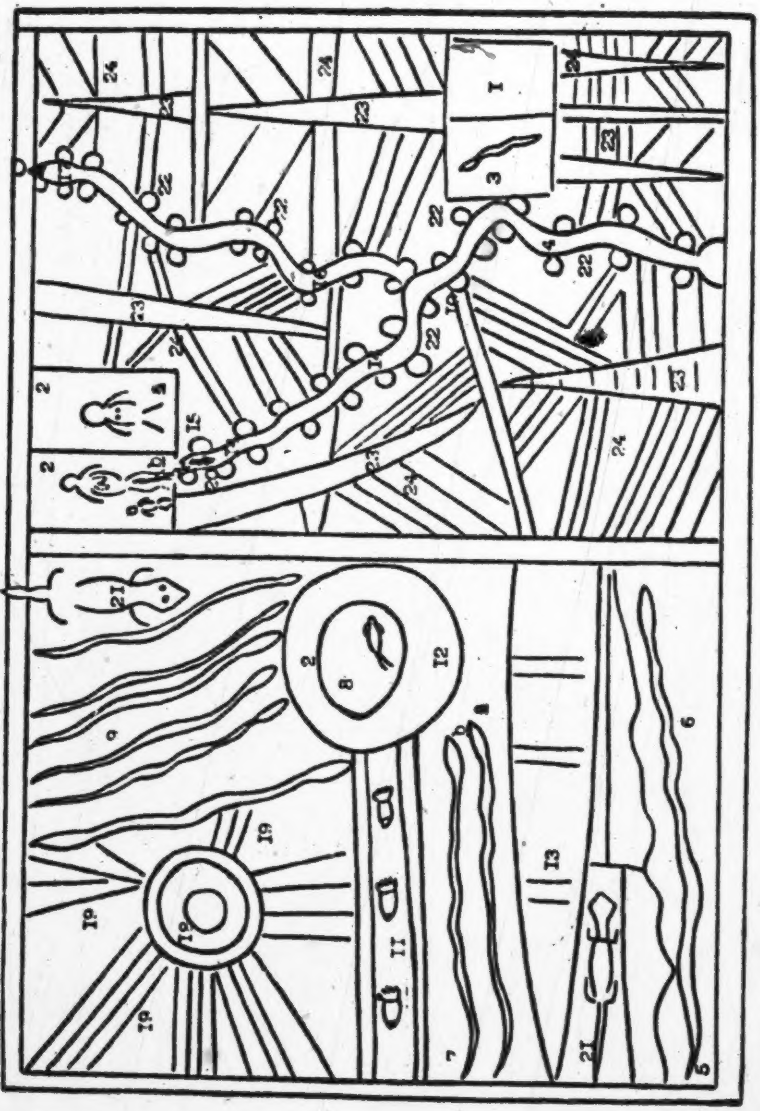
[8] Said by abprigines to continue for about two days after child-birth.

[9] Reference: No. 105, Feb. 4th, 1947, Book 18, Series A, R. Berndt.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TEXT FIGURE I.

Sketch-Key to Plate IV depicting part of the Wauwalak Myth.

1 is the billabong or sacred well, Muruwul, also called Mernaninja, 532
Mainbunu:ru and Tamalanungomi. In its waters is the Julunggul 773
watching the Wauwalak (2); *a* the young sister, *b* the elder sister and child. 3 is another Lightning Snake (python), who smells the blood at 1 (Muruwul) and goes back to 4; then it comes round to 5.

6 is the female Julunggul, while 7 shows the male (*a*) and female (*b*) Snakes who are "after" the Wauwalak. (Here, an important variation occurs: two Julunggul, a male and a female, are said to be [184]
"after" the Wauwalak, whereas in the first version the male Python is said to play only a subsidiary part, and the female is the one who takes the initiative.)

The Two Sisters (2) hear the noise made by the Snakes. They leave the elder sister's child in their camp, *murlk* (8), and begin to dance, circling around, trying to stop the Julunggul's' progress; 12 represents their dancing.

The drawing then returns to an earlier scene. All the food they have caught has "made itself bird", and flown away to the sacred well (1). The younger sister asks the older, "Look, what are we going to have now? All our food has flown away". They look back towards 9, and see all the young snakes coming in their direction (the Sisters are now at 8): they had thought this camp was free from snakes, but now they are everywhere.

Then they see the two big Julunggul (7 *a* and *b*) circling around, and it begins to rain, for the female snake has made rain at Muruwul (1). And while the older sister goes out for stringy bark to make their *murlk* weatherproof, the Julunggul sneaks through the rain; the younger sister has remained to look after the child.

Now while the other sister is out gathering bark, at 10, she goes over to the billabong for drinking water; as she drinks, her afterbirth blood falls into the water and is carried down to where the Julunggul live. It is from this that the Snakes smell the blood, and emerge. (The sequence of events is slightly confused, and should apparently conform to the first version.) The sister returns along a road (11) which shows her footprints. The two complete the hut (8) and enter it; now it is growing dark, and they sleep.

While the Sisters and child sleep, the Julunggul sends a "signal": that is, lightning from Muruwul. The younger sister feels this: she awakens and looks through the doorway. She sees the vivid flashes of lightning and is frightened; returning to her sister, she says: "You wake up, sister, there's something coming along, they can smell us".

Then they both dance around, 12, as women do now in the main camp, in order to keep away the Julunggul. When they can dance no longer, they return to their hut. In the meantime the two Julunggul (7) have been sneaking towards the women; the other snakes (9) "only take *mala* for the big Julunggul" (that is, they belong to the

532 Julunggul clan of snakes, but do not take part in the actual swallowing).
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At last the Julunggul reach the *murlk*: the female snake puts her head into the aperture and swallows the elder sister and child (2 *a*), and then the male snake puts in his head and swallows the young sister (2 *b*).

When they have completed the swallowing, both stand erect with their heads away up in the sky; they try to "straighten" themselves up, resting on their bellies. All the younger snakes (9) are "very surprised because of the swallowing". It is probably these younger snakes with whom they hold the conversation mentioned in the first version.

They try to erect themselves still further into the sky ("like big rainbows"), but fall down because they have been eating the Wauwalak and the child. They fall over to 13, which shows the mark from their fall, in the shape of the sacred dancing ground. They try to stand up again, but "they are too happy, and talk" and fall over.

Then the Julunggul return along a track, 4, to Muruwul (1), where they live for a time. Later, they "walk" down this track, which is edged with stones;[10] they clear the track, casting the rocks (22) aside; they reach 15. There they vomit the Wauwalak (2). First the male snake vomits the young sister, then the female snake the older sister and her daughter. After this the Julunggul return along the track, 14, to 16, and rest at 17 (the head of the Julunggul).

At 18 is a *gundir* anthill, containing *nga:ti*[11] (white ant) termites (19: the drawing representing streams of ants), which come around to 15, and bite the Wauwalak and child. As soon as these are bitten, they awaken and become alive again.

The Julunggul look over to 15 from 17, and see that the Wauwalak are moving about. They return down 16 to 14 and reach 15, where again they swallow the Sisters and child, but do not vomit them a second time.[12]

The Julunggul go back to Muruwul (1) and continue living in its waters; they are still there to-day. Muruwul is surrounded by *gulwiri* "cabbage" palms: some stand at the water's edge, and some have their roots deep down in the waterhole itself so that only the top trunk and branches appear (23). 24 shows "spring water" running in all directions, from the rains caused by the Julunggul. The track marks of the Snakes (leading to 15), and the place at which they fell (13), are still to be seen. 20 shows the elder Wauwalak's afterbirth blood being washed down the Snakes' track (14) after the

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[10] Like the specially designed tracks of Julunggul, used in the *djunggawon*, *kunapipi* and *ngu:rlmak* rituals.

[11] In some versions these are described as "meat" ants.

[136] [12] Pythons still do this to-day: they eat something, swallow it, spew it up, lick it, and eat it again: this time they retain it.

**rain towards the billabong (1). 21 depicts a *gungalung* (big-headed 532
gecko lizard), playing around the Muruwul billabong after the rain; 773
for these lizards always come out at the beginning of the rainy season,
"and follow up the Julunggul".**

This is a remarkable drawing of one aspect of sacred mythology in this region; it belongs to a large series dealing with all aspects of religious doctrine in north-eastern Arnhem Land.

This version tells us something of what happened to the Wauwalak after their swallowing. The first version also deals briefly with this aspect, as follows:

After the swallowing, the female Julunggul returned to Muruwul;
there she vomited the Wauwalak and child, who were revivified by
the bites of the ants, but were eventually re-swallowed. The Wau-
walak spirits are still at the sacred well: "we can't see them, although [776]
they can see us, for now they belong to Julunggul". When they see
human beings coming to this site, the Julunggul swallows them
again in their spirit form, "for they are unable to walk about like
ordinary people".

The Wauwalak-Julunggul mythology serves to substantiate the 773
Kunapipi rituals: a co-ordinating thread links the various events
set out in the story, and these are symbolically expressed in the 796
ceremonies. This myth is distributed among the three rituals already
mentioned, the *djunggawon*, *kunapipi* and *ngu:rlmak*; the *ma:ndiwala*
(the *marndiella* ceremony of Warner, *op. cit.* pp. 329–334), localized
around the Roper and Rose Rivers, has not yet reached north-east [171]
Arnhem Land. Each of them expresses a particular feature of the
myth.

The Kunapipi, adapted as it is to local traditional needs, has lost 773
none of its symbolism and intent. In conventional Kunapipi myth-
ology one of the principal themes is the Fertility Mother's pregnancy, 776
and her giving birth to "Dreaming" folk: these people she kept in 796
her womb, and "let them out" from time to time to perform sacred
ritual. Finally, there is her death, and the totemites' enactment of the
returning to and leaving the Mother's womb. The continual birth
and rebirth of the totemites symbolize the sequence of the seasons, [805]
for Kunapipi had the power to send out the spirits of all the natural
species. She was accompanied by the Rainbow Snake, her male
counterpart.

At Yirrkalla, the Fertility Mothers are the Wauwalak: the pecu- 773
liarly female characteristics of menstruation and afterbirth blood 776
accentuate the concept of procreation. The presence of the Pythons
(the male and female Snakes), their ejaculation of saliva (semen), 831
their entry into the *murlk*, and the swallowing, complete the theme.
The actual swallowing, said to mean coitus, may also symbolize the
"return of the Wauwalak to the uterus of their Mother", as in con-

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
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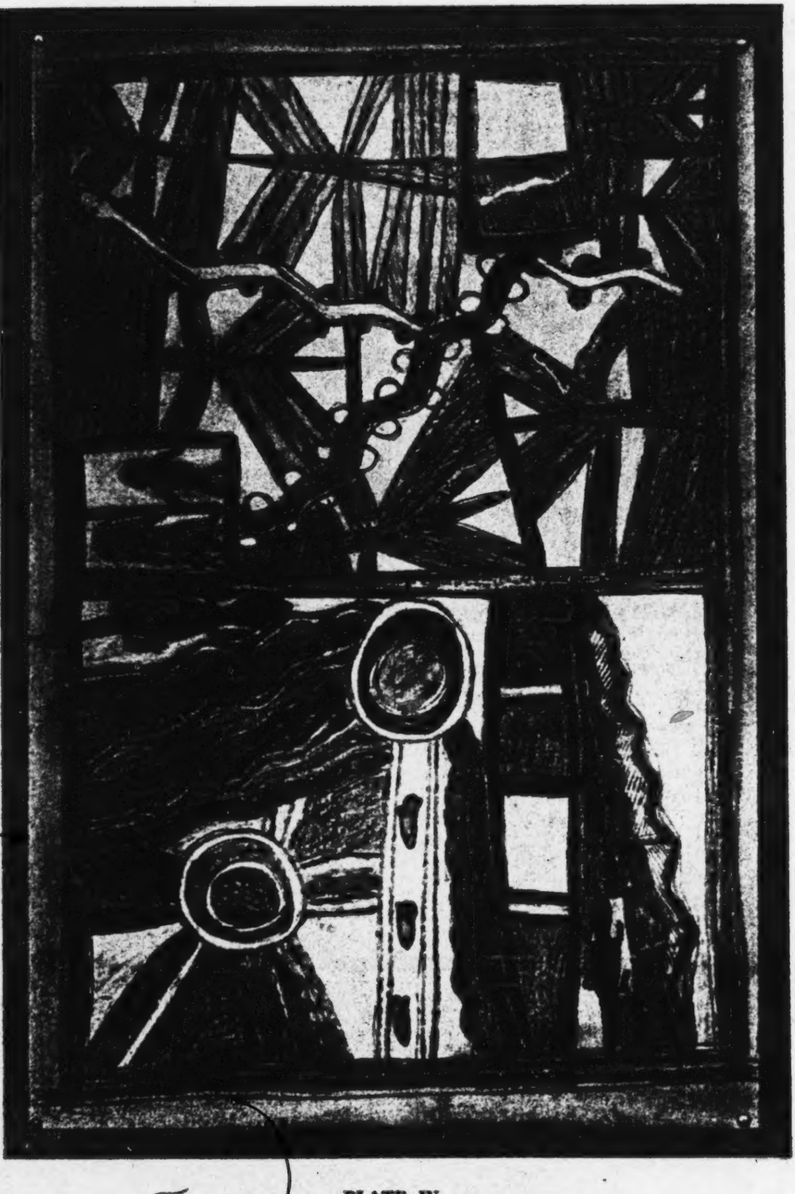

PLATE IV

[Facing p. 32]

773 ventional interpretation of Kunapipi mythology. The vomiting of the
Wauwalak, with their revivification and re-swallowing, and their
776 subsequent swallowing in spirit form, extends the symbolism, and
may be compared with the coming and going (birth and rebirth) of
831 the totemites to and from the Mother's uterus.

This interpretation, based on details expressed by aborigines themselves, concerns only the Kunapipi rituals, for other purely indigenous ritual must be interpreted in the light of the Djanggawul mythology, and various extensions of the Wauwalak cycle. However, the basis of Yirrkalla religion rests on the premise of a Fertility Mother, who is an "Eternal" symbol of nature in her abundance. She is accompanied by a Great Snake as a symbol of insemination.

The association of the Snake with a Fertility Mother is fundamental in this doctrine. In recognizing this fact, we must realize that
[842] the aborigine of northern Arnhem Land understands the importance
of coitus in bringing about conception and birth. And this principle
is basic in their thinking.[13]

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[13] *Vide* L. Warner's interpretation, *op. cit.* pp. 371 *et seq.*

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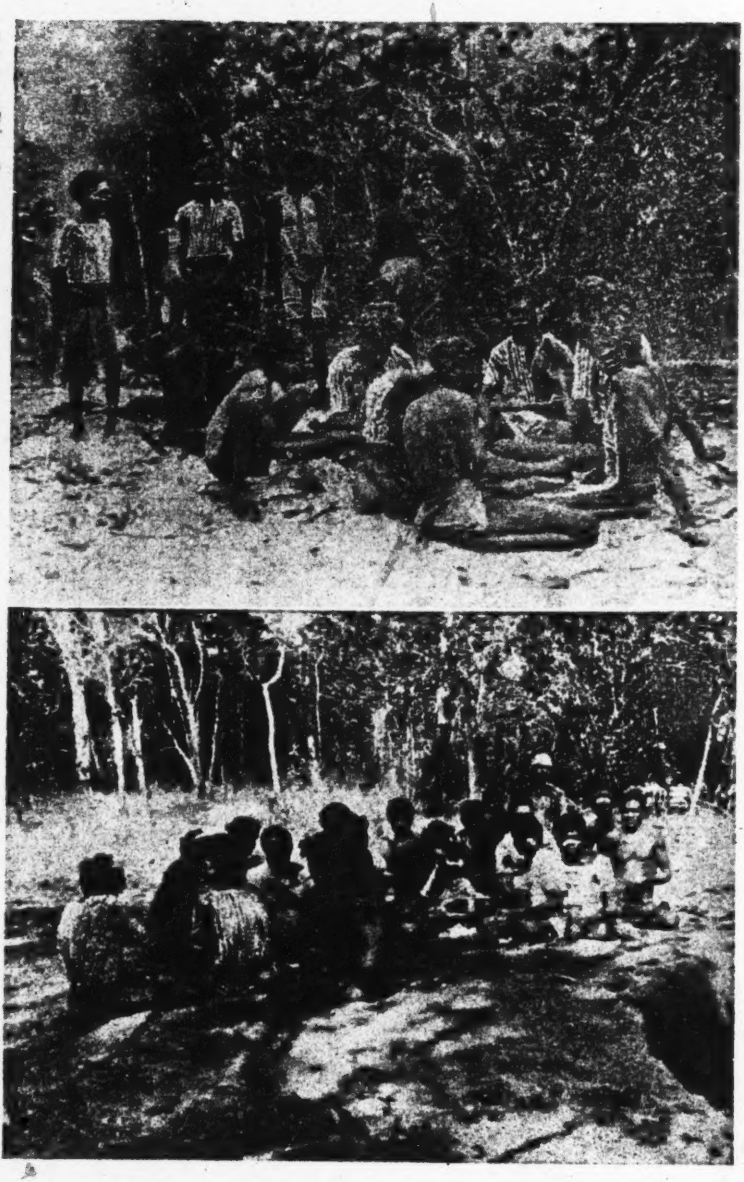

PLATE V

[Facing p. 33]

CHAPTER IV

ITS EXPRESSION THROUGH RITUAL

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In the last chapter we saw that the Kunapipi ritual was substantiated by the Wauwalak-Julunggul mythology, possessing certain outstanding features. The Wauwalak had indulged in irregular sexual intercourse before leaving their home territory, and in consequence a child was born to the elder sister. On their journey, they named all the totemic animals, reptiles, birds and vegetables that were to become sacred *marelin* objects, prominent in future ceremonies which would concern the increase of their species, and would include three main rituals, the *djunggawon*, *kunapipi* and *ngu:rlmak*. The odour from the afterbirth blood and the younger sister's menstruation aroused the great Rainbow or Lightning Snakes (pythons), who caused lightning and rain, representing the onset of the wet monsoonal season. Attempting to stop the progress of the Snakes, the Wauwalak danced and sang songs associated with the above rituals; in this way they furnished songs for the rituals which later would commemorate them. The climax of the myth is the swallowing, the culmination of events that bring about fertility, the action that brings into force the mechanism for the increase of human beings and natural species, and the continuation of the seasons. Subsequent events, such as the talking of the Snakes, the vomiting and re-swallowing of the Wauwalak, merely accentuate the actual climax, and stress the process of birth and rebirth. All these features are expressed, by symbolism, in ritual.

The myth itself is not an idle chronicle of events that occurred in the past, and are to-day without real and vivid meaning. The Wauwalak, although they lived in the *wonga:r* (Dreaming) Period, when Ancestral Beings walked the earth creating and naming various physiographical features and natural phenomena, are just as much alive spiritually to-day as ever they were. With the Julunggul, they possess qualities and power without which, it is said, man cannot exist. He is in need of "divine" intervention, that will ensure his material and spiritual continuation. This power which releases the forces beyond man's control, but essential to his well-being, is possessed by the great Ancestral Beings who are spiritually "eternal".

The crux of the matter is, how may this "power" be released ? To know the sacred mythology and its intent is not sufficient; religion,

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951

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773 to these aborigines, is not just passive reliance on the Ancestral
796 Beings, an inertia based on the hope that "something is bound to
turn up" if they wait long enough. They must do their part to ensure
the action of the Ancestral Beings; and their part is the ritual
re-enactment of the relevant myth. This releases the "power" (or
dal) inherent in the Ancestral Beings. This *dal* then finds full expression, and fertility is assured.

Thus the myth is thought to express the intentions of the Ancestral
Beings, who possess the power to carry them out; and this power is
[805] released (or brought to bear) by sacred ritual. It arranges the seasons,
[789] maintains an adequate supply of food, and ensures the continuance
of the group as a whole.

Before we proceed with the Kunapipi ritual, it is necessary to relate the final part of the Wauwalak myth, explaining the way in which this ritual was obtained and handed down from *wonga:r* times.

The three rituals, of which only one is to be treated here, are
grouped together in terms of kinship ties. The *djunggawon*, an age-
[561] grading ceremony, is called *katu*, son, and so is its principal ritual
[534] object, the long *julunggul* wooden "trumpet". The *ngu:rlmak*,
mainly religious in character and open only to adult postulants, is
termed *ba:pa*, father, and so is its ceremonial hollow log *uwar*
"drum". The *kunapipi* is *mari* (mother's mother's brother), like its
[601] main ritual emblem, the *jelmalandji*. Although the relationship term
of *mari* signifying the *kunapipi* is one that normally denotes age (that
is, in the grandparents' generation), it is less important from the
point of view of sacredness than the *ngu:rlmak*, said to be the major
ritual of the trilogy. Sometimes, however, the *ngu:rlmak* is spoken of
as "the father of the *kunapipi* side", while the *kunapipi* and *djunggawon* are classified together. But in practice it seems that, irrespective
of the terminology of *mari*, the Kunapipi is really of secondary
importance.

796 All the Wauwalak-Julunggul ceremonies belong to the *dua* clans
or linguistic groups, and are under the direction of *dua* moiety
616 totemic headmen: but members of the *jiritja* moiety assist in the
dancing, singing, and making of ritual objects, and may even include
certain of their own particular dances based on purely *jiritja* myth
cycles. *Dua* ceremonial leaders, however, are recognized as the principal custodians of indigenous ritual, for they possess not only the
Wauwalak but also the Djanggawul. In contrast to the more conservative *dua* groups, the *jiritja* have incorporated introduced
themes[1] into their ritual life.

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[113] [1] *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, Secular Figures of North-East Arnhem Land, *American Anthropologist*, 1949, Vol. 51, No. 2, pp. 213-222, with plates; Discovery of Pottery in North-Eastern Arnhem Land. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVII, Part 2; and R. Berndt, Badu, Islands of the Spirits, *Oceania*, Vol. XIX, No. 2, pp. 93-103; R. and C. Berndt, *Arnhem Land, Its History and Its People*, for publication.

The Kunapipi should be primarily *dua*, but a split of some kind 796
seems to have taken place, so that now the *jiritja* moiety groups have
a separate song cycle; this may perhaps be explained by the fact that, 616
in the eyes of the north-east Arnhem Landers, the Kunapipi is of alien
origin. The division of ritual activities between both *dua* and *jiritja*
people is of importance in ascertaining the relationship of individual aborigines to the Wauwalak ceremonies. This aspect is most
apparent in the manufacture of the *jelmalandji* "posts"; but we can
touch upon it only briefly here. We are concerned not so much with
the individual's attitude towards his ritual and mythology, or with
the relationship of the various neophytes to one another on the
sacred ground, as with the fundamental doctrine of this particular [771]
Aboriginal religion and its expression in ritual. Therefore the individual must play only a subsidiary part in this specific study.

After the swallowing of the Wauwalak, the Two Sisters "changed" 773
their names to Ka'lerika'lering (or Girilinggiriling, that is, "having
been swallowed") so that they "could belong to the Kunapipi side". 796
That is, in theory, during the performance of the Kunapipi, the Sisters
are no longer called by the term Wauwalak, although this is still
employed in the *ngu:rlmak* and *djunggawon*. We shall, however, when
referring to the Kunapipi, continue to call them Wauwalak.

Shortly before this, an unmarried male python, called *Lu'ningu* (that is, from *lu'ni*, a young unmarried man; *lu'ningu*, "place of young unmarried men"), had come out of the sacred Muruwul well, and watched the Julunggul swallowing the Wauwalak. When they were vomited out, Lu'ningu went all round the Muruwul country, swallowing all the young unmarried boys (termed *lu'nilu'ni*). But whereas the Wauwalak were vomited and became alive, the young boys were vomited dead, and did not revive. They had died while inside the Snake, and when they were vomited there was no flesh on their bodies; only bones emerged.

As a protest against this outrage by Lu'ningu, the remaining men held a large meeting and decided to kill the Snake," for he was no good, this Lu'ningu: he had swallowed all the young men and they had died". They compared the Lu'ningu with the Julunggul, saying: "Lu'ningu is no good, he vomits up his people dead. But Julunggul is all right; he vomited up the Wauwalak so that they were alive". So they hunted out Lu'ningu, spearing him until he died.

"What are we going to do?" they asked one another then. So they 773
made a large *jelmalandji* which stood upright in the ground, in
memory of this Snake. That is, "they took a picture of Lu'ningu" 778
saying, "we have to make this Snake, because we killed him". Some 796
confusion exists here, in identifying the *jelmalandji* with the Lu'ningu;
in the big Kunapipi rituals this object is said to represent the
Julunggul who swallowed the Wauwalak.

773 When these people had completed the *jelmalandji* emblem, they
held another meeting "to think about the Wauwaluk". "What are
796 we going to do about the blood of those two women?" they asked
[778] one another.

The most important ceremonial headman, named Nga:ti (that is, termite, sometimes called "meat" ant, who was responsible for revivifying the Wauwalak), stood up; grasping the blade of his stone-spear, he cut his arm and let the blood flow out. "We make ourselves like those two women", he said.

Then other men got up; while some cut a vein inside the elbow,
[785] others cut the inner part of their forearm above the wrist, and all tied
ligatures about their upper arms. This is a substitute for re-opening the penis incisure to obtain a flow of blood similar to that of the Mother Kunapipi: it should be remembered that a great deal of the original Kunapipi ritual concerns subincising groups.

As they let the blood flow they said, "Ah, very good: that is the blood of the 'Spring' Women (that is, afterbirth blood and the menstruation)".

"And what shall we do for the Snake's 'shout' (that is, the sound
773 made by the Julunggul)?" they asked.

778 They built another *jelmalandji*, larger than the first, to represent
the Julunggul who swallowed the Wauwalak. They smeared arm
796 blood all over its surface, and on to it fastened wild cotton (or white
feather down) to form a pattern symbolizing the Snake. "But it makes no sound", they said. "It is not like the Julunggul of the *djunggawon*, that when blown makes the sound of the Snake; nor is it like the great *uwar* which 'cries out' when beaten. What shall we do?"

So they took a clean piece of wood, from the tree which the
[534] Julunggul had split by lightning (see previous chapter), and marked
it with the Snake design. They obtained human hair cord, and threaded it through the hole they had bored at one end of the wooden slab. When they swung this object (the bullroarer), they could hear the sound of the Julunggul: ~~"This is~~ the different shout, for the Kunapipi side".

In this case, too, contrary information exists: and this bullroarer
773 for use in the Kunapipi is sometimes said to be the voice of Lu'ningu.
778 Its sound then is a "little bit low", spasmodic and quick, for this
Snake was full from having eaten so many young men, and he was
796 tired. In the *ngu:rlmak* side, the sound of the bullroarer is longer and
184 heavier, for the Julunggul had eaten only the Wauwalak and the
child. In the eastern *ngu:rlmak* rituals, however, the bullroarer is not used, being reserved solely for the Kunapipi. Such confusion in the identification of fundamental ritual objects is not unusual in Aboriginal religion; and for our purpose here it is preferable perhaps to conform to the original version, in which the bullroarer is said to be

the voice of Julunggul.[2] At the same time, however, the Lu'ningu 796 84 Snake plays an important part in purely male sacred life.

The whole problem of interpretation depends on the distribution 773 of the Wauwalak ritual among the *djunggawon*, *kunapipi* and [778] *ngu:rlmak*. For example, the first is a re-enactment of the swallowing of the Two Sisters by Julunggul, and the performance of totemic ceremonies relevant to the animals caught by the women for food. The second concerns the swallowing of the young men, the presence of Julunggul after the swallowing of the Wauwalak, and a number of dances relating to copulation and procreation, stressing the theme of fertility. The third and final ceremonial sequence deals principally with the *murlk* shade, and with other Snakes including the Julunggul. All these rituals to some extent overlap, and the whole myth may be enacted to create a framework for specific aspects.

In the *djunggawon* the Python is called Julunggul and swallows the Wauwalak. In the Kunapipi it is usually known as Moiit, and in addition to swallowing the young men, and disgorging and re-swallowing the Wauwalak, is said to have swallowed the Nga:ti; but this is not substantiated by relevant mythology, and appears to be a Rose River addition. In the *ngu:rlmak*, the same Snake is known as *uwar*. As Julunggul is the commonest sacred term for the Python, it has been retained throughout this work, although some alternatives have been used.

In the Kunapipi, male neophytes leaving the main camp for the sacred ground are said to be swallowed by Lu'ningu, just as he swallowed the young men in the Dreaming Era; and in the old days they had to stop away from womenfolk from a period of two weeks to two months, symbolizing their stay inside the belly of the Snake. When the period of ceremonies is finished they return as new men (for Lu'ningu vomited up the young men dead). In the *djunggawon* the sacred ritual is associated more with women, because of the Wauwalak, and the novices may be seen constantly: "for those Wauwalak were vomited quickly, and were soon alive".

It is the practice, in the Kunapipi, to send messengers in all directions, 773 notifying various groups that a ceremony is to take place. Young male postulants are also sent with their guardians, and their 796 going symbolizes "vomiting". 203 That is, in leaving their home camp and going to another some distance away, they are being vomited through the air to the strange place by Lu'ningu (in other versions, by Julunggul). And when they eventually return, together with alien groups who are to attend the Kunapipi ceremony, they are swallowed again "just as the Wauwalak were", or like the young men in the

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[2] In regions where the Kunapipi is more or less indigenous, the sound of the bullroarer is the Fertility Mother's voice, and the object itself symbolizes her uterus. *Vide* Chapters IX–XI. In other areas, the bullroarer represents the penis, and its symbolism depends sometimes on its shape and sound. [534]

773 Dreaming Period. When they first leave their home camp they are painted with red-ochre and arm-blood, which represent the blood 796 of the Wauwalak. That is, for the purpose of the ritual they become 203 the Two Sisters, and are swallowed by Julunggul; and on their emergence from the ritual, they are revivified just as were the women. On their returning home, they are again smeared with red-ochre and arm blood before entering the sacred Kunapipi ground.

In all the rituals we find the main theme of the Wauwalak's adven- 773 ture with Julunggul; but subsidiary Pythons are present, and tend to confuse this aspect of the doctrine. There are Lu'ningu, the Julunggul 796 herself (either alone, or with her husband playing an active or inactive 776 part), and the group of young snakes who watched the actual swallowing of the Wauwalak. Another python, an unmarried male, is associated with Gru:awona, where he still lives in his spirit form. He threw up a great amount of earth and formed a hill; then he dug up more earth, and formed another hill with a high bank at one side. Under this bank he lives, beside the deep pool; here the water is continually swirling, and its surface is the colour of the rainbow. Close by, at Muruwul, it is said, is a rainbow reaching up into the sky: that is Julunggul "twisting up" to catch the Wauwalak. It was here, at Muruwul, that man first "took part for that Snake" (see myth above); "for that Snake got to be Dreaming *mareiin* for us, because he swallowed the Wauwalak. Now we make that Wauwalak [778] *murlk* on our sacred ground, in just the same way as it was first made at Muruwul. In it we place the long wooden *julunggul* 'trumpet', all painted and decorated in totemic designs, for the *djunggawon*, or the *uwar* log 'drum' for the *ngu:rlmak*. And instead of Julunggul swallowing the Wauwalak, it swallows the young boys we send out to the rituals".

In the Kunapipi the two long *jelmalandji* emblems are erected, but they cannot "talk"; "we have to make sound for them, so we twirl a bullroarer". This is called, in translation, the "shout side", because, informants explain, "those two *jelmalandji* couldn't speak, and we have to make own language for them". Orthodox versions stress that the *jelmalandji* are the two Snakes, the male and female Julunggul,[3] standing up looking about after having swallowed the Wauwalak and the child, and talking to other Pythons on the Wessels and elsewhere.

773 The ***murlk*** or hut, also called ***bambu:la*** (a very sacred term), is not 778 used to any extent in the Kunapipi, but it is present in both the 796 ***djunggawon*** and the ***ngu:rlmak***. As well as being the hut in which the

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346 [3] In central-western Northern Territory these *jelmalandji* are said to represent both the Fertility Mother and the Rainbow Snake (a superimposition of the snake on the Mother); at Birrundudu, the *jelmalandji* had pearl-shell eyes, and other decorations. And in some versions (see later) one *jelmalandji* is the Snake, and the other the "cabbage" palm growing at Muruwul (the latter serves to symbolize the Julunggul).

Wauwalak sheltered, and into which the Julunggul came, the *murlk* 773
symbolizes the uterus of the Mother (the Wauwalak or Djanggawul). 778
Old aborigines say: "You know, when the Julunggul went into the
hut, we mean that a penis is entering a woman's vagina, and this hut 796
is a uterus too: that is why we have it on the sacred ground, for it 346
reminds us that everything must come from the Mother's uterus.
That is how we came in the Dreaming; and people still continue to
come in that way, don't they? And why do we have that Julunggul?
Well, don't we have to have a penis to open up and inseminate the
woman, so that she can give birth to children? And when the
Julunggul swallows the Wauwalak, that is like a penis being swallowed by a vagina, only we put it the other way around. Now, when [789]
we hold our big rituals, we do the very same things, because we want
the seasons to come, and things to grow, and people to be born:
that is the real meaning of what we do".

The Kunapipi rituals have been described in some detail by Dr. 114
Warner (*op. cit.* pp. 290–311), and the reader is referred to this for
comparisons. We will mention only various features found in the 796
Yirrkalla region, indicating their relation to the Wauwalak mythology, and interpreting (from native explanations) the actions of the neophytes. It is beyond the scope of this work to record minute details of each stage of the ceremony, for this would entail description of dancing and many irrelevant actions, individual interpretations, and the whole interaction of men and women in and away from the sacred ground. Some of the Kunapipi songs, used both on the sacred ground and in the main camp, are given in Chapters VII and VIII, and these reveal certain details not treated here.

* * * *

The Kunapipi is held usually in the dry season, when food is 796
plentiful; for during this ceremony people are reaping the benefits of
performances held in the previous year, and at the same time are
preparing for the coming wet season and the subsequent growth of
food. Ceremonies may extend over a period of two weeks to two
months, and in unusual cases as long as two years. But now, when [797]
the Mission frowns on the Kunapipi and its attendant rituals, it may
be brought to a close after a few days with the result that much of the [177]
intricate symbolism is omitted. The principal Kunapipi leader is
usually a man of the Li:alauwermiri or an affiliated linguistic group, [614]
or one whose totemic *rangga*, *marciin* objects, or song cycle are
associated with Muruwul sacred well and the Wauwalak. In the [616]
Yirrkalla region the Kunapipi leaders may have come from Rose
River, being members of groups which are in other respects culturally
alien, or from *dua* clans near Rose River who have obtained the
Kunapipi from further south.

796 The ceremony begins when messengers are first sent out to the
various camps to notify other groups, and when the chosen initiates
[203] (young boys who have gone through the *djunggawon* age-grading
[561] ceremony) are taken away from their home camp. But it may be
some time before the more serious parts of the rituals can commence.

796 In the meantime, while awaiting the visitors, the *dua* headmen and
the Kunapipi leader go out from the main camp and make a ceremonial
778 ground or "centre" (that is "Sandy" or "Sunday") place;
this entails the clearing of a ground which the men are in the habit of
[534] using for such a purpose. The Kunapipi leader makes a bullroarer,
its cord attached to a stick by which it will be swung; its painting and
[533] anointing with blood (as described above) are accompanied by singing.

Some time afterwards, the first Kunapipi ceremony takes place in
796 the main camp, "to let the women know that it is beginning". Men
533 sing "outside" Wauwalak and "outside" Kunapipi songs which
summarize preceding events, while the women dance. These are
535 called *gudambiri*, or ordinary secular dances; although they do not
pretend to be really sacred, they are nevertheless most important, for
they put everyone into the mood for the coming rituals. Non-sacred
garma (or clan songs) are also sung and danced. These may continue
for weeks before the main rituals commence: but towards the end,
the men, women, and children sing the "outside" Kunapipi songs
with their rapid rhythm.

Out in the bush on the sacred ground[4] a man swings the bull-
796 roarer. There is a hush; the deep-throated sound of Julunggul is
[534] heard by all in the camp. In answer, the Kunapipi leader calls, followed
by the cries of all the women: "they cry out just like those two
Wauwalak, for Julunggul is sneaking towards the camp, as he did
towards the *murlk*". *Jiritja* men answer, too, symbolizing *jiritja*
snakes.

796 Almost immediately after this, the *jiritja* men take out the young
881 boys to meet the Julunggul (that is, if they have not been sent away
to other camps; if they have gone, this part of the ceremony takes
place when they return, with the visitors who are to participate).
[302] The boys have been smeared with red-ochre and arm blood and,

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[778] [4] The sacred ground is in the shape of a triangle. This is similar to the *djunggawon* dancing ground, and is said to resemble Julunggul's body. One side of the elongated triangle is classified as *dua*, and the opposite side as *jiritja*: but this is only for ritual purposes. At the apex of the triangle a hole is dug, symbolizing Muruwul: this is the *nungguru*. The "inside" meaning of this triangular dancing place is said to be the Mother's uterus: men go into the uterus for rituals. This conforms to the meaning of the ground in other regions, for example, in western-central Northern Territory. The Kunapipi ground is arranged differently from that of the *djunggawon*, but retains its fundamental shape.

as far as the women in the main camp are officially concerned, are 796 "swallowed by the Snake". Theoretically, they are not supposed to return to the society of women until they are re-born at the end of the 881 Kunapipi. Old men "chase the Snake back" into the sacred ground, where it swallows the initiates; thus they avert the disaster of the whole main camp's being swallowed by Julunggul. This part of the ritual reveals a propitiatory aspect; the initiates "are given" to the Julunggul in order to save the rest of the camp.

Later that night the men return, having left the boys in the protection of their guardians; they tell the women (particularly the initiates' mothers, mothers' sisters and mothers' mothers), "All the young boys have gone to-day; Julunggul has swallowed them up". And the women wail, singing the clan songs of the initiates, as if they were dead. In practice, the women do wail, as they do in the *djunggawon* when the boys are taken out to the sacred ground by the men; [152] but in theory it is said that "the women don't cry, for they might become sick", since Julunggul might be antagonized, thinking the [753] women objected to her methods. "She might return and swallow them too".

On the two following nights, the same events take place: Julunggul comes towards the camp, her voice is heard, and more young initiates are taken out. This continue until all the initiates are collected on the sacred ground; and a sequence of totemic dancing takes place, "teaching" the young boys. Some of this dancing takes place before dawn; intermittent singing and acting continue all night, while the women return the calls of the men from the main camp, or cry out when they hear the hum of the bullroarer. The cry of the women is the cry of the Wauwalak when they saw Julunggul; and when they dance, their dancing is similar to that of the Wauwalak, trying to stop the progress of the Snake. The *jiritja* snake men dance to represent the snakes who watched Julunggul swallowing the Wauwalak. The totemic animals, birds and vegetables that are sung and danced at morning and evening rituals are those seen by the Wauwalak, or collected by them for food. These, it will be remembered, became *mareiin*, sacred, when they left the Wauwalak and joined their ceremonial leader, Julunggul, in Muruwul well.

A little later the men, who have spent part of the evening on the 796 sacred ground, leave this place, and dance with lighted paperbark torches towards the main camp. On their way they meet the women, crouched under conically shaped mats, termed *ngainmara*.[5] Two old women walk up and down, calling out the names of foods which at

[5] The *ngainmara*, made of plaited pandanus, is now rarely seen in native camps of this region, having been superseded by blankets. It was once (as mentioned in Chapter 1 *c*) an important part of a woman's equipment, used for [285] providing shade, for a protection against mosquitoes and sandflies, and for a temporary shelter for a menstruating girl. Symbolically, it represented the [841] uterus, and this aspect is treated in detail in the Djanggawul cycle. (*Vide* R. Berndt, *Djanggawul*, for publication).

796 this time are forbidden to women, and relating all the incidents that directly refer to the Wauwalak, for example, the pregnancy of the elder sister, the flow of afterbirth blood, and the menstruation of the young girl.

The *jiritja* snakes call out, and are answered by the women; and nearby the bullroarer is twirled again. Then the dancing men file around the *ngainmara*-covered women, the leader beating his sticks and singing; the young boys are present. The women have brought presents of food, which are handed over to the *jiritja* snakes and their companions.

The dancing men symbolize Julunggul surrounding the women (the Wauwalak in their *murlk*); but these are not swallowed, because none are menstruating or have after-birth blood. "The men dancing around are smelling, but they smell no odour of blood."

796 574 [431] About this time, visitors from surrounding territories reach the Kunapipi camp; and the foregoing rituals, that serve as introduction to the ceremony as a whole, are completed. Some of them, however, are repeated, both at the sacred ground and at the main camp; important features are the men's dancing around the *ngainmara*-covered women, and the giving of presents, which are taken back to the ceremonial ground and offered first to Julunggul (for his swallowing) before being eaten.

796 536 On the sacred ground the *jiritja* men dig a large hole (*nanggaru* or *nonggaru*, billabong) representing Muruwul; all the animals, birds, and vegetables, in the guise of totemic actors, climb into it and dance, just as did those which "ran away" from the Wauwalak. Two other holes are dug, and in each hole squats a man; one, covered with paperbark, represents the female child of the elder sister, while another actor squats outside the hole as the mother. In the second hole is the younger sister, who is menstruating. The "child" in the hole cries, and the "mother" moves around it; then both the "sisters" leave their positions and dance like the Wauwalak. A number of these totemic animals and so on, particularly the opossum, form pairs (male and female) and enter the *nanggaru* (Muruwul), where they simulate coitus.

[831] A number of actors, representing opossums, dance forward around the *nanggaru*; the males have long erect bark penes protruding from their hair-belts. They enact the copulation of these animals. [881] All these dances are accompanied by singing and beating of sticks, and the young boys going through this ceremony are shown each one and told its significance. On the conclusion of the dancing, every morning and evening, *bukali* (*dua*) or *bukalilji* (*jiritja*), depending on the singing, are called by the leader. Men crouch together while the *bukali* "power" names are called in reference to the totemic beings, and at intervals they shout. [These "power" names, being sacred terms (although there are secular power names too) are in the manner

of invocation.] Most of the actors are smeared thickly with wallaby 796
or kangaroo grease, and then with red-ochre. When they become hot 536
from dancing the grease runs and drips off them, symbolizing the [302]
sweat of a pair of totemic animals (or human beings) after coitus. The shining grease is termed *laklak*, which is an alternate name for the younger Wauwalak sister.

When the second new moon appears from the beginning of the 796
Kunapipi, depending, of course, on the proposed length of the ceremony, the men again go out to the sacred ground. Warner (*op. cit.* 778
p. 301) mentions that the Muruwul well (or *nanggaru*) is abandoned [805]
at this stage; but in the eastern counterparts witnessed and discussed, it is retained. This appears to depend mainly on the inclination of the Kunapipi leaders, who at Yirrkalla usually take their pattern from Rose River. A large crescent-shaped trench is dug, the *ba'uma* (also called *kanala*, or *kanalara*, the central-western Northern Territory term). This is an extremely important symbol in the Kunapipi. It is usually about ten to twelve feet long, four to five feet deep, and about four feet wide, with earth piled along its concave sides. And it may signify any of the following: the track mark of the female Julunggul; the mark left by her fall, after swallowing the Wauwalak; the crescent-shaped position in which the Wauwalak rested in their *murlk*, before the Snake swallowed them; the clitoris of the Wauwalak; and, its real "inside" meaning, the uterus of the Wauwalak (as a substitute for the Djanggawul Fertility Mothers). Another smaller hole is also dug during some ceremonies; this is called the "younger hole", the uterus of the younger sister, whereas the larger *ba'uma*, also called *da:p* (or *dapi*, foreskin, symbolizing a dilly-bag or uterus), is the uterus of the elder sister. But the principal hole is the *ba'uma*, and is always present in the Kunapipi.

When the *ba'uma* is completed, snake totem actors dance or writhe 796
in the hole. Then two actors, one representing a man and another a
woman, dance the "mating dance". The man has an erect bark penis 831
and moves in pursuit of the "woman", who is desirous of coitus: 535
they move towards the trench and dance around it, and at its entrance
they simulate sexual intercourse. The Mother is said to be present [776]
in the *ba'uma*, and her life-giving powers are made operative by the sexual actions of the two dancers. ("The acting of coitus by the totemites is like the uterus being fertilized": the Mother is having sexual intercourse, so that she may produce.)

Various other dances are held in the *ba'uma*, at which the young initiates are present; the majority are related to coitus. There is, for example, the *darl:t* dance. Two men, representing male and female wagtails, sit opposite each other in the trench with legs folded beneath them; their knees touch, and in the dancing they simulate coitus. There is also the *moiit'manina* (*moiit* being an alternate name for Julunggul) dance, of the male and female Julunggul Rock

796 Pythons. One sits on the thighs of the other in the trench, and they
535 have "coitus". These ceremonies are spread over a number of days,
831 often with a certain amount of repetition.

In the meantime, the *jiritja* men have been making the *jelmalandji*
796 emblems. It is said that "the *jiritja* have got a *dua* job", and they hunt
778 all the *dua* away from the special place near the sacred ground where
[616] the manufacture is in progress. This "giving the job" to the *jiritja* is
termed *ir'wondji* or *marahwa*. They must be paid with food, clothing,
tobacco and indigenous objects, not on the sacred ground but in the
main camp. The *jelmalandji* are twelve to twenty feet in length, and
about two and a half feet wide at the centre. They are formed with a
solid pole, around which pads of grass and paperbark (and in these
days blankets and bagging) are tied with native fibres. The outer
covering of bark is then smeared with arm blood and red-ochre, on
to which is fastened birds' down or wild cotton so that a meandering
pattern is formed, symbolizing Julunggul. At the apex of the "post"
[301] is a bunch of cockatoo feathers "like a man wears in his hair". Both
jelmalandji, one larger than the other, have similar designs. But
although one represents Julunggul, the other is said to be the
"cabbage" or "wild coconut" (*gulwiri*) palm, which was standing
near the Wauwalak's hut, or at the palm-tree swamp from which the
blood was washed down to the sacred well (or billabong). Aborigines
[773] explain, "they made the Snake out of that tree", meaning either that
the first *jelmalandji* was constructed from the palm tree, or that the
Snake itself was derived from it. The latter is probably correct, for
this "wild coconut" palm is said to be the spirit of Julunggul: "their
spirits were standing in the shape of palm trees near Muruwul, when
the Julunggul emerged from the well to swallow the Wauwalak".

While the *jiritja* are making the *jelmalandji*, the *dua* prepare the
796 feather down for body decoration: this has come from the *jiritja*,
237 who are paid for it. It is the *dua* who play the most important part in
301 the ceremonial dancing; and while the final touches are being put to
616 the *jelmalandji*, the *dua* actors decorate themselves, sticking on the
feathers with arm blood. When everything is ready, the two moiety
[783] groups meet each other, and rub sweat over one anothers' eyes;[6]
after this, each group may see what the other has done. The *jiritja*
examine the body designs of the *dua*, and the latter may observe the
jelmalandji.

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[6] That is, the *jiritja* rub sweat from their armpits over the eyes of the *dua*, and *vice versa*. This process is carried out when new *rangga* objects or *marelin* ceremonies are seen for the first time, or when novices or visitors are observing sacred dancing or ceremonial emblems (objects, body or bark paintings, and so on). It means that their eyes may now be opened, they can now see "with sacredness". "The old people have to do this to us before we can see"; for, as one informant explained, "It is like moving over some of the old Law to the youngest (younger generation), and we get trouble if we look straight away". It is called *bunggun'mirljunna*.

On the same evening, the young boys "passing through" the 796
Kunapipi are placed on the heaped-up earth beside the *ba'uma* 881
(*kanala*), and a shallow trench, some fifty feet long, is extended from 881
one end. The *jelmalandji* have not yet been brought out. Various 535
groups of men, representing mainly opossums, dance down this
trench towards the boys. The initiates are moved to the shallow
trench, and the men dance along it into the *ba'uma*. Then the boys
are moved and placed in the *ba'uma* itself: this is the core of their
Kunapipi experience. They are covered with bark and told to go to
sleep; and as they lie there, "covered up in the hut like the Wauwalak
Sisters", men dance the yam, opossum, wild honey, rat,
wallaby, iguana, native companion and kangaroo – all those animals, [262]
birds, reptiles and vegetables which the Wauwalak attempted to cook.
They dance down the shallow trench and almost on to the boys.

Then, suddenly, the bark that covers the boys is removed: they are
dazed, as if from sleep. The older Kunapipi leaders step forward and, [783]
taking sweat from under their armpits, rub the palms of their hands
across the eyes of the boys. They tell them to look up: "See, the
Julunggul are emerging from the waters!"

"Which way ?" they ask.

As they look they see the two Snakes standing beside the *ba'uma*, each supported by one man: these are the two *jelmalandji*, one the Julunggul and the other the "palm" tree. The boys are "very surprised", asking "What's this ? Where did they come from ?"

"They are the *jelmalandji*", reply the old leaders. And the two *dua* men holding the *jelmalandji* begin to shake them, "making the Snakes dance".

"Ah! ah!" The boys keep staring up at the great towering *jelmalandji*.

Then the men dance a series of totemic dances, similar to those mentioned above, before the *jelmalandji* and the boys.

These are followed by the spectacular "pokiti" head-dress dance, 796
performed by two of the older men. They wear tall, conically shaped
head-dresses, built up on top of the head from a basis of grass or 292
bark pads, bound tightly with human-hair twine so that they taper 535
to a point; this in turn is decorated with arm blood upon which down 881
has been stuck to form the Snake design, and cockatoo or native
companion feathers are attached to the apex. The word "pokiti" is
pidgin English; the real "outside" secular name (widely known) is
kundja, and the "inside" sacred name *milali*; when the two old men
dance together they are called *jalwaru*- (or *jalwul*) *milali*. The actors [301]
are decorated with birds' down, and bunches of leaves are attached [237]
to their upper arms.

The "pokiti" itself represents the short pandanus or screw palm, seen by the Wauwalak, growing in the swamp at Muruwul: the movement of the head-dress in the dance signifies the pandanus

796 moving up and down with the swell of the water. The two actors
dance towards the *jelmalandji* and the boys, holding carved wands
292 that represent the pandanus shoots. They move forward slowly,
535 their "pokiti" slightly waving, like the pandanus gently swaying in
881 the calm swirl of the "spring" waters. When their actions are quickened their heads shake violently, and this is the pandanus rustling and bending in the strong "spring" waters[7] resulting from the rains sent by Julunggul. The feathers at their apex are the snakes' heads, appearing between the pandanus clumps.

When they reach the *ba'uma* both actors kneel and are surrounded by the singing and stick-beating leader and other participants. They shake their "pokiti" until these become loose, and the leader knocks them off and rubs himself against the actors (that is, he is spiritually one with the totemic dancers). The young boys, and others who are not fully conversant with Kunapipi ritual, as well as visitors, are rubbed against the "pokiti" or against the decorated down on the actors' bodies; this contact transfers "power" (or the sacred essence of the Dreaming) from one to the other. Then the sacred *bukali* "power" (invocation) names are called over the actors, while they shake themselves, to the accompaniment of the beating sticks. Other dances follow, most of which concern the things seen by the Wauwalak at Muruwul.

Next comes the *djamala mareiin*, or ritual fire-throwing. The term
796 *djamala* serves as an important link in all Kunapipi rituals, here and
372 elsewhere, for although it has lost its real significance at Yirrkalla it
881 still includes the throwing of fire-brands. In central-western Northern Territory, for example, Kunapipi ritual is divided into morning (day) and evening (night) ceremonies, the former termed *wilbibi* and the latter *djamalara* (*djamala* being a variation).[8]

In the Yirrkalla version of the Kunapipi, the throwing of fire-sticks by older men across the sacred ground, and over the *ba'uma* in which the boys sit, symbolizes the lightning sent by Julunggul; the Snake flashes the lightning over the camp in which the Sisters are resting.

796 Then two actors dance forward, representing the Wauwalak Sis-
881 ters; one has a paperbark pad which is the "child". From one side of the ground another actor appears; he is the Julunggul Snake, and moves slowly forward towards the "women", until he reaches

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[192] [7] These strong waters are called secularly *ka'lela*, or in sacred speech *gumanggaul*: the latter word is a corruption of the term *gumugu*, which is of very general use in the central-western Northern Territory Kunapipi. For a further definition see Chapters X and XI.

[8] For a further example of the widespread use of this word, see R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Section X. In that area it has been corrupted to *djama:lak* or *jamalak*, and refers to a secularized promiscuous ceremony. Real *djamalara* singing includes some of the most beautiful sacred rhythms in Aboriginal Australia. [533]

the mound piled beside the *ba'uma*. When the Wauwalak actors 796
see the Snake, they act as if "they are shamed", here termed 881
g(w)o:ra'nganbinganbi. They are "shamed" because they have the
child, and their blood is running.[9]

When this dance is over, two *dua* men bring out a pole from the darkness of the bush beside the sacred ground, and hold it horizontally, waist-high from the ground, on the concave side of the *ba'uma*. Within the crescent trench lie the young boys, and on the opposite (the convex, though sometimes on the concave) side of the *ba'uma* the *jelmalandji* stand, held by two men. Then, to the ritual crying of all participants, the *jelmalandji* are pushed over so that they hit the pole and tumble to the ground. They are picked up, and pushed over again; this is repeated several times, until the feathered ornaments on top of the *jelmalandji* fall off. The Julunggul are falling over, after swallowing the Wauwalak.

Then the young boys are removed from the *ba'uma* and placed on
the mound beside it, while the *jelmalandji* are put in their place.
Fire-sticks are thrown into the *ba'uma*, to burn the grass and paper-
bark surrounding the central poles of the *jelmalandji*. At the same [785]
time men open their arm veins, sprinkling blood on one another and
into the trench; this is the blood of the Wauwalak, and blood itself [826]
symbolizes life. Rows of dancing men come down the sacred ground and along the shallow trench, to and around the *ba'uma*, pushing the mound into the trench and gradually filling the hole, until the earth from dancing feet covers the *jelmalandji*, and the ground is flattened "so that no one will see that trench".

This completes the main section of the Kunapipi: the sequence of these rituals may be changed according to the inclination of the totemic leaders, or some may be omitted.

* * * *

This is followed by two concluding features: the ceremonial 796
exchange of wives, and the return of the young boys into secular 837
camp life. The latter always takes place at Yirrkalla; but local
aborigines say that the former is less common, and it does not seem [881]
to be well integrated with indigenous social behaviour. Mission
pressure has been brought to bear, in recent years, on the perform- [797]
ance of the Kunapipi, and especially on ceremonial intercourse; but
it is still practised at Milingimbi and Rose River, and away from white [177]
supervision on the settlements.

In other parts of the Territory where Kunapipi holds sway, and where "Big Sunday" is an integral part of native religious life, ceremonial copulation brings these rituals to a climax. It represents a

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[9] The word "shame" signifies "shyness", the normal feeling a menstruating
woman feels towards a man who observes her blood. The European cultural [841]
connotation is lacking in this pidgin translation of the native term.

796 culmination of all the religious and totemic ceremony of the past weeks, and helps to serve as an emotional outlet. It establishes
837 goodwill between participants, and cements the bonds of friendship, bringing groups closer together. Ill-will and jealousy cannot, theoretically, flourish at such a ceremonial time. Moreover, it draws the women closer into the sacred scheme of the Kunapipi, by entering into the fundamental physical relationship between men and women: for the sexual act is basic to these rituals, its significance deeply rooted in the concept of procreation, brought about through the contact of male and female. Thus ceremonial copulation, ritualized in the Kunapipi, substantiates the religious doctrine, and stresses its underlying meaning of fertility.

Generally speaking, in the Kunapipi ceremonial areas, ritual copulation is termed *ka'rangara*; and in the Birrundudu Kadjari (equivalent of the Kunapipi) it is associated with certain special forms of dancing by men and women on the sacred ground. At Yirrkalla it is called *djambinba*, meaning "the working", for natives use the word *djama* ("work") when referring to the act of coitus. But the exchanging of wives is called *g'ruliriliri* or *lirilirija*.

[609] Visitors who have come for the Kunapipi ceremonies have their correct tribal relationships established to everyone else in the camp. Most of those who are invited are known; but others come from far away (from Rose River, for instance, or from the south of Milingimbi), and it is necessary to determine their approximate relationship to others for the purpose of exchanging wives. This is done with much talk and discussion, comparing subsections, Dreaming affiliations, and so on. When a local man finds that a certain visitor is his classificatory brother, he will send his own younger brother to inform him that he may have the local man's wife for Kunapipi copulation; presents too are sent to the visitor, expressing goodwill. In return, the visitor sends a message that he will accept this arrangement, and that his own wife will come to the Kunapipi for ceremonial copulation with his local "brother"; he also sends presents. This is the normal procedure. But at times two men, without the aid of a third party, will decide between themselves to exchange wives; and occasionally, these days, a man may arrange matters with a visitor's wife (with whom he desires intercourse, or with whom he is
796 having a liaison) without the consent of her own husband.

835 This means that usually in the Kunapipi a man will copulate with his "long way" brother's wife, whom he calls *kalei* (wife), normally
[601] a classificatory mother's brother's daughter or mother's mother's brother's daughter's daughter, the daughter of her partner's *mukul* (mother's mother's brother's daughter). This, aborigines say, is the pattern for "the new generation", which differs from the traditional arrangement of the old people. In the old days (that is, prior to white
[602] contact in this and adjacent areas) it was customary for ceremonial

copulation to take place between two "cousins" (*mukul* and *gurung*), 796
who were normally tabu-ed relatives, formally unable to talk to one 835
another, and classified as mother-in-law and son-in-law.[10] That is, [602]
the sacredness of the occasion demanded that sexual intercourse take
place between individuals who were at other times tabu. Such coitus
would, on the sacred ground, be considered far more potent, from [842]
the point of view of fertility, than that between persons who were
classified as "husband" and "wife", were of different moieties, and
were comparatively easy of access even if not living together.

Coitus between *mukul* "cousins" at ceremonial periods was 796
termed *ngirimbu'njamari'gwu:wa*, loosely translated as "living with
one's cousin for *now* or to-day (that is, for a little while)". Their 835
coitus was said to result in "starting a baby in the female *mukul*"; 616
and this was later looked upon as belonging, spiritually at least, to the male *mukul*. Both *mukul* would be of the same moiety; and the child produced from such a union, which normally would be considered incestuous, would by taking the moiety of its father (for descent of the moiety is patrilineal) also be taking that of its mother. Recognition of the fact that a child would be born of this ceremonial intercourse between two *mukul*, and the parentage acknowledged, demonstrates one aspect of these people's knowledge of physiological paternity.[11] The reason for the carrying out of incest-
uous intercourse on the sacred ground, for ceremonial purposes, is [773]
reflected in the Wauwalak mythology; for it will be recalled that the elder Wauwalak sister had incestuous relations with a clansman (of the same moiety) before coming to Muruwul, and as a result of this intercourse, a child was born. But although the elder Wauwalak had sexual relations with a man who was of the same moiety as herself, the child apparently took not *dua*, its actual father's moiety, but *jiritja*, as if it had had a *jiritja* father (*vide* Wauwalak myth, Chapter III). "We do it", aborigines say, "because of that Wauwalak: that is why two *mukul* copulate, and their child is acknowledged".

Usually, however, it seems that intercourse takes place between 796
a man and his classificatory brother's wife; but exceptions do occur 835
which may normally be considered incestuous or "wrong-way".
Even before the actual ceremonial intercourse takes place, as a climax to the Kunapipi, copulation between Kunapipi partners

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10. This ceremonial copulation with a *mukul* still occurs in the Rose River region. *Vide* Chapter V, which describes a drawing of this ritual.
11. This, aborigines say, "happened in the old times, when the old people had this Kunapipi (suggesting that the Kunapipi was introduced at an early period); we changed from that. Now we only get the daughter of that *mukul*, but in the old time we should have got the *mukul*". But other information casts some doubt as to whether this practice of having ceremonial intercourse with a *mukul* took place only in the past. For example, it is said: "our old people married their *mukul* in the old days, and *now we do it* (that is, copulate) in the Kunapipi, in memory of those old times".

796 begins with surreptitious meetings at night in the nearby bush.
There may be more men than women attending the ceremony, and
835 it may so happen that one woman will have a number of Kunapipi
partners to whom she will go. Her husband realizes that this period
is charged with social effervescence, so that her indulgence is viewed
as a conventional expression, and as an important element in the
atmosphere of general goodwill. Some women, however, prefer to
wait until the last night, being emotionally excited, then, to an
abnormal degree. Prior to this final stage, there is general exchange
[832] of obscenities and erotic allusions between men and women, and
between the proposed Kunapipi partners.

Two or three nights before the finale the men return to the sacred
796 ground, and sitting around the fires begin to sing parts of the Kunapipi
535 cycle relating to ceremonial copulation. The women come into
786 the ground, some decorated with feathered string headbands. All
[301] women may attend, but only those decorated and ochred are "to
dance for coitus". Their special form of dancing is called *ngamamali*:
they dance before the singing men. They dance the bandicoot dance,
hitting their legs together to make a rhythmic sound that blends with
the song and the beating sticks.

Then the head Kunapipi woman, a tribal sister or father's sister
of the male leader, dances forward, leading the other women[12] back
towards the main camp. As they dance along they call out, in just
the same way as the men in the *djunggawon* do when they enter the
main camp. And like those men, the women too symbolize Julunggul
moving towards the Wauwalak. Instead of calling it Julunggul or
gundaru as the men do, the women call it Kitjin. "But it is the same
Dreaming Snake, even though it is called by a different name: for
the women call it Kitjin so that we (the men) won't know the real
meaning." They turn away again from the main camp and return to
the sacred ground, calling out their sacred term, Kitjin! Kitjin! and
warning the men: "Don't call this name, or watch us;[13] don't come
[778] close and see us, or your bellies will come up like pregnant women".
And the men sit down quietly, with heads bent, for they may not
look directly at the dancing women: the women are *mareiin* (sacred),
just like the dancers in a totemic ceremony.

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[12] It is said that all these women are "big women", and none are young girls.
No young boys are present, for the initiates are at one end of the ground
"asleep", or covered up with paperbark or blankets; children are left in
charge of the old women or young girls who have remained in the main camp.
This really means that the women attending the Kunapipi are married;
the young girls are those who are unmarried, betrothed, or who have not yet
[881] reached puberty. We are not discussing in this context ritual defloration of
[836] young girls, as an adjunct of the Kunapipi, just prior to or on their attaining
puberty.

[13] That is, the men cannot look straight at the dancing women, "we are frightened of the power they have". Actually, however, they do see them dancing forward.

796 786 778 The leader then erects two emblems, which she and her companion have made secretly out in the bush. One is a post, consisting of paperbark bound together with twine, and resembling a smaller undecorated edition of the men's *jelmalandji*: this is the Kitjin or Julunggul Snake. The other emblem is a pole, sometimes red-ochred and decorated, which represents a stringy-bark tree. Both objects are stood upright in the ground, some distance from the men, who are said to be "like young boys being shown their first sacred ceremony".

Then, lifting up the Kitjin (or sometimes using another paperbark-bound object), the head woman hits the stringy-bark tree emblem, so that pieces of paperbark fly across the ground. This symbolizes the lightning sent by Julunggul while the Wauwalak were in their hut; the lightning "split" (that is, struck) a stringy-bark tree, and pieces of wood flew in every direction. It was from one of these pieces that the sacred bullroarer was made (*vide* Chapter III).

This procedure may vary in different areas, depending on the length of the Kunapipi. The women may perform their ritual further away from the men, but still near the sacred ground; and men may be forbidden to see their dancing, or the emblems they erect. After their own ceremony, they may then come on to the sacred ground and dance before the men. In some cases, too, this section is omitted.

796 786 835 Finishing their Kitjin dancing, they return to the *ngamamali*, and form a dancing line before the men, who now look up and begin to sing. While the women dance, various men stand up and walk over to their Kunapipi partners, and hand them presents of food, string or ochre; a woman will keep some of this herself, but may pass some on to her husband. It is at this time too that much joking takes place, and the bolder of the women (those who have gone through the Kunapipi before) make obscene gestures, holding open their labia [832] majora, slapping their thighs, or taking up a piece of stick and holding it erect like a man's penis and moving it up and down as in coitus. When the dancing is over, the men and women return to the camp, while some copulate[14] on their way back; although they should not have coitus until the last night, it is generally recognized that this does occur after such erotic dancing.

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[14] At Yirrkalla no special position is preferred during the act; this depends principally on the couple concerned. However, the usual positions taken, in the Kunapipi rite, are as follows: A woman lies full length on the ground with her legs apart; her partner lies between them and directly upon her, holding her around the neck, while she clasps her hands at his back. Or the woman may sit on the ground, well back on her buttocks, the trunk of her body leaning back supported on her arms. Her legs are flexed and open; the man puts his legs under her and his hands around her, so that his penis enters further and their genitalia are closer together than if he lay upon her. [833]

Vide Chapter V, where the special position taken in coitus on the sacred ground is mentioned and reproduced in a native drawing.

In some regions, as along the Roper River, there is the belief that a man's body may not touch the woman's during coitus. During the act he suspends

796 786 835 On the final night, the Kitjin and the *ngamamali* dancing are repeated. The Kunapipi partners are ochred and heavily greased. The men sing and the women dance. As the singing and dancing continue, a man will rise and go over to his partner, take her by the arm, and lead her into the bush for sexual intercourse. One by one the men stand and take their partners into the surrounding shadows; and since there are usually fewer women than men, some women may have coitus a number of times. Men too may, if they choose, have coitus more than once during the night, either with the same partner, or with another woman whose husband has already been [431] approached, and presents exchanged. Women, at this time, stimulated by days of anticipation, take a special pride in the number of men who copulate with them. After a man has had sexual inter- [783] course with a woman, her husband comes to him and rubs his sweat on the man's legs and arms, so that he will not become ill from this ritual behaviour.

796 786 345 837 There are several variations in the above pattern of ceremonial copulation, and we mention the two most important. While the dancing is in progress, the Kunapipi sexual partners may retire to a specially constructed shade or hut (which is the *murlk* of the Wauwalak) and have coitus. The woman either remains in the hut to receive other men, or returns to the dancing. Should there be more men than women at the ceremony, the woman will most likely remain in the hut for the evening, accepting one man after another. In this case, there may be several "huts" or windbreaks near the sacred ground, each woman taking possession of one. (Not all the female dancers retire to these huts; as mentioned, there are some who do not have partners.) This conforms more to the pattern of ceremonial copulation in the Roper River Kunapipi.

796 786 837 The second variation is in the manner of ceremonial copulation (the *ka'rangara*) throughout central-western Northern Territory. After the dancing, the women form two rows, according to their moieties, on the sacred ground; they are slightly apart from, though alongside each other. All lie down and assume a position ready for coitus. Their male partners dance forward and take positions before one line of women, while on the opposite side another row of men dances into the ground and stands in front of the other line. The men have their backs to one another, and their two rows are between the two rows of women; this arrangement prevents husbands from watching their wives. Then the men begin to have intercourse, some awaiting their turn. When a man has finished he goes to one side

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[833] himself above the woman, or inserts paper-bark between their bodies. It is said that the sweat of the woman is possessed of great potency which, if transferred to the man, will cause him harm (that is, affect the specific sacredness of the act). However, this is not found in the north-eastern Arnhem Land area.

of the ground, but is careful not to look over towards his wife. 796
Both of these variations are known at Yirrkalla, but are recognized 786
as taking place outside their own Kunapipi area.

A man or woman will rarely refuse the ritual Kunapipi obligations 837
of having coitus, or giving and receiving presents. Their frank attitude
towards the question of sexual relations, and their understanding
of the importance of such ritualized copulation, predetermines
their full acceptance. Moreover, there is an obvious content
of enjoyment, for both men and women are stimulated by the pre- [832]
coitus dancing and interchange of jokes. Should there be refusal,
caused perhaps by the dislike of a certain Kunapipi partner, that
man or woman is soon obliged to conform, for the thwarted partner [753]
will threaten to send Julunggul to the other and so cause sickness.

The initial incestuous relations of the Wauwalak Sisters with [773]
clansmen, as we have seen, are cited in explanation of this ceremonial
copulation.[15] There is also the deeper intent of fertility: the [789]
symbolic spiritual fructification of the Mother. There is a tendency
to regard this sexual exchange of wives as providing an element of
"danger"; for here are men and women copulating with the wives
and husbands of others, virtually under their eyes and with one [835]
another's full (that is, in theory) sanction, and in "older times" with
tabu-ed relatives. All is made possible on the sacred ground, under
the "divine" sanction of the great Ancestral Beings and the Mother.
The inclusion of ceremonial copulation in the Kunapipi is said to
"raise its status to that of *mari* (mother's mother's brother, of the
older generation)", but not to the high position retained by the
ngu:rlmak, or the *dua* and *jiritja nara* Djanggawul and Laintjung
rituals.

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On the morning following the ritual intercourse, the final group of 796
Kunapipi ceremonies is performed.

Just before dawn, all the *dua* men assemble at one end of the sacred 881
ground, and the *jiritja* men at the other. The women have returned 778
to the main camp, and the young initiates are sitting with their
guardians. All the men are painted with white paint, spraying it over [302]
one another from their mouths; and most have spears. They begin
to clap their spears, one against the other, and dance towards each
other, changing sides. The bullroarers begin to twirl at this juncture,
and the women answer their sound from the main camp. The men's [535]
dancing continues till sunrise, when the two moiety groups dance
down to the boundary between the ceremonial ground and the main [616]
camp, taking the young boys with them. Here, to the accompaniment
of the bullroarers' sound and ritual calling, they erect the

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[15] *Vide* L. Warner, *op. cit.* pp. 307–8, who also provides a native interpretation of this aspect.

796 *djepalmandji* (this is a central-western Northern Territory term; the 881 variations used at Yirrkalla are *djapalmani* or *djapanban*). Two forked posts are placed upright in the ground about six feet apart, 778 and a thick connecting ridge pole, about four feet from the ground, placed between them, resting on the forks. This pole is hung with branches, so that the space between it and the ground is thickly covered.

Two *jiritja* snake men (mentioned before) climb on to the forked posts; each takes up his position, sitting within the fork, facing the other. The young initiates are then placed under the bushes of the *djepalmandji*, so that they are completely covered and hidden from outside view; they hold on to the ridge pole with their hands, their feet on the ground, for they are supposed to be hanging from the pole. The two *jiritja* men then begin to call out in the ritual manner known as *djangatun'jiritjiana*, moving the palms of their hands against their mouths; they are calling out for all the men and women to come to the *djepalmandji*.

The *djepalmandji* forked sticks signify not only the Kunapipi but the sacred *ngu:rlmak*, for they represent the *murlk* hut built by the Wauwalak; the initiates are put inside, like the Two Sisters. But they have also another important meaning. The two *jiritja* men (*jiritja* totemic snakes) who sit in the forks "are really the babies (although only one baby is mentioned in the Wauwalak myth)[16] of the Wauwalak". They sit in the fork, which symbolizes the uterus of the Wauwalak, and cry ritually in the same way that a child cries when issuing at birth from its mother's womb. This is one of the most important points in this terminating series of rituals; for here, symbolically expressed, is the enactment of childbirth, a crystallization of Kunapipi intent. The meaning is the same as that of the *djepalmandji* forked stick of central-western Northern Territory, which is there described as the Mother's uterus, in which a "baby" rests.

Under the cover of branches and brush, below the *djepalmandji*, are the young initiates who have passed through all the main Kunapipi ceremonies; they lie passive in the uterus (or uteri) of the Wauwalak. Soon they will be coming out, and will be spiritually re-born (that is, "their spirit comes out new"), just as the Wauwalak child was born.

The cries of the two *jiritja* men in the forks of the *djepalmandji* have summoned the women in the camp, and they make ready to come towards the place where the young boys are hidden. Behind them, within the shelter of the surrounding bush, the bullroarers are swung, "pushing along" the women and children: they are smeared

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[16] That is, each man represents the child of the elder Wauwalak sister. L. Warner, *op. cit.* p. 251, mentioned in his Milingimbi version of the same myth that each sister had a child. It will be remembered that this feature did not appear in the Yirrkalla version.

with red ochre, and dance along in the same way as did the Wauwalak 796
sisters. They reach and surround the *djepalmandji*, calling in answer
to the sound of the bullroarers; all the male dancers are hidden 881
about forty yards away in the bush. The women then leave the 778
djepalmandji and sit in a bunch some few yards distant. The sound
of the bullroarers continues, and the two *jiritja* men in the forked
sticks cry out. All the women and children lie down, and are covered
with *barakala* bark and *ngainmara* mats. When they have all settled
down, the Kunapipi headman calls out for the male dancers, who
enter the ground dancing in single file and calling out *wa ! wa ! wa !*
This is the call of the *dua matju* flying fox; it is used theoretically to
"trick" the women into thinking that something else is meant, "but
really the cry belongs to the two Wauwalak sisters; for they cried out
kei'wa ! kei'wa ! kei'wa ! when they were frightened of Julunggul
coming towards their camp". That is to say, the cry *kei'wa !* is used
only by women, and men cannot use it. As one informant said, "we
can't yell out like women, or we might have to change our business
(sacred ritual) for women's business, and they would take over ours.
So we make ourselves flying fox, and then change the cry to *wa !*
but all the same it is the Two Sisters crying out".

"What side is this ?" the women are said to wonder, covered with
their *ngainmara*: "Flying fox side ?" "But," the men continue,
"they can't get the meaning of what we do." (This, of course, is a
peculiarly male attitude.)

The same men add, "But really we have been stealing what belongs 796
to them (the women), for it is mostly all woman's business; and since
it concerns them it belongs to them. Men have nothing to do really, 881
except copulate, it belongs to the women. All that belonging to those 562
Wauwalak, the baby, the blood, the yelling, their dancing, all that
concerns the women; but every time we have to trick them. Women
can't see what men are doing, although it really is their own business,
but we can see their side. This is because all the Dreaming business
came out of women—everything; only men take 'picture' for that
Julunggul. In the beginning we had nothing, because men had been
doing nothing; we took these things from the women". This latter is
a particularly interesting statement, reiterated in the Djanggawul
Myth cycle, which stresses peculiarly female attainments: the power
of reproduction, and the phenomenon of menstruation.

The dancing men run forward, cry out, and run forward again 796
until they reach the *djepalmandji*; then they surround it, and the
covered women and children. The two *jiritja* men in the forks cry 881
out "like that Wauwalak child, to awaken the two sisters in their 778
hut" (that is, the cry is supposed to awaken the women who are
covered with the *ngainmara*). The men all carry spears and dance
around the women, prodding them lightly with the shafts, so that
they "awaken" and sit up, and look towards the *djepalmandji*. They

796 see the young initiates coming out of the bushes, emerging from the
uterus, all covered with red-ochre that symbolizes "the spring blood
881 of the Wauwalak". And the men call out to the women saying, "See
778 those young men covered with the saliva of that Snake"; "but really,"
and the women are not officially supposed to know this, "they are
covered with the spring blood". The women begin to call out, and
return dancing to the main camp.

The *djepalmandji* are knocked down, and the young boys are taken to the men's camp. That night, "outside" Kunapipi songs are sung, and the men dance around the boys. Then with the men leading, and the initiates following, they all dance off in single file to the sacred ground.

Here the initiates' headbands are removed, and returned to the
Kunapipi leader for use in the next rituals. After some sacred sing-
[302] ing, all the men, together with the young boys, paint themselves
completely with red-ochre; at the same time, in the main camp, all
the other men, women and children, whether *dua* or *jiritja*, do like-
wise. On everyone's back is outlined the Julunggul Snake, "so that
[532] you can't see it". (The snake design is merged with the general red-
ochring, so that only a bare outline is visible.) This design is some-
times extended across the chest or breasts, from left to right, to join
the main snake pattern on the back; "in the beginning those Wau-
walak did this, because of that big Julunggul". This painting is
termed the "baptizing" (that is, ceremonial purification), and all are
brushed with smoking ironwood branches which have been held in
the fire.

The men return from the sacred ground to the main camp, and sitting in groups begin to sing the "outside" Kunapipi, while the women dance in the same way as they did during the first rituals. The young initiates return that evening to the single men's camp. The purification ceremony and singing may be held on succeeding evenings for about a week to a fortnight, when it is felt that sufficient precautions have been taken to prevent sickness.

This concludes the Yirrkalla Kunapipi ritual.

* * * *

773 Although we shall return in succeeding chapters to the ritual and
796 interpretation of the Kunapipi, it may be as well, at this juncture, to
survey briefly the foregoing material. It is apparent that Kunapipi
794 ritual has been closely related to the Wauwalak mythology; this
expresses symbolically the aborigines' conception of an "eternal"
[805] sequence of the seasons, and the reproductive faculties of Nature, of
which man is an incidental but dominating feature. This fundamental
[776] belief is crystallized in a Fertility Mother (the Wauwalak as a trans-
mutation of the Djanggawul) who embodies this concept, while the
male representative of fructification also is present.

The following Table summarizes these aspects. 773

TABLE 796

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		Materialistic Aspect of Yirrkalla Religion	Spiritual Aspect of Yirrkalla Religion
Fundamental Aspects		Nature; Seasons; Vegetable and animal growth; reproductive faculties of man; survival of the group; basic drives (for example, food and sex)	
Repositories of Divine Power		Djanggawul; the Wauwalak. (Concept of Fertility Mother and Penis Snake): alone capable of releasing the power which brings about continuation	Unquestioning faith
Expressions and Instruments	**Mythology**	Djanggawul and Wauwalak Cycles (explaining the power of the "Divine" Beings)	Ideology, Religious philosophy and meditation
	Ritual	Sacred ritual and ceremony (of which the Kunapipi is merely one aspect). An instrument by which the "divine" power is released	Absorption in ritual as a "divine" purpose (spiritual edification)
Achievement		Production of necessities for physical continuance and survival. (Maintenance of *status quo*)	Spiritual growth. (Laws and ideals based on the behaviour of the "divine" Beings)

Here we observe the belief that ritual, as an expression of the 773
sacred mythology, releases the "power" vested in the Divine Ances-
tral Beings for the ultimate welfare of the tribal group. This is pri- 796
marily a materialistic aim, for its specific intent is the production of 789
necessities for the physical continuation and survival of the people, 794
the bringing into force of an elaborate mechanism that expresses man's innate selfishness and egocentricity. But as an adjunct to this thesis, Yirrkalla religion has an underlying non-materialistic thread, that is an expression of spiritual growth. Based as it is on an unquestioning acceptance of the religious doctrine, a belief in the omnipo-

773 tence and immutability of the "eternal" Beings, a religious philosophy
has been developed among the mature "thinkers" of the group.
796 This finds its outlet in the mental exercise of meditation, interpretation,
789 and explanation, but is nevertheless restricted by the deep
794 faith that is a living part of all its manifestations. Within the limitation
of defined premises, a certain degree of flexibility is apparent;
philosophic concepts have not remained static, nor ideology stagnant.
Throughout the centuries of religious development, alien ideas
[177] have been considered and discussed, even when they were unorthodox,
and apparently opposed to indigenous theology. They have been
accepted or discarded; but all have, in this way, served to illuminate
and extend the basic principles which serve to explain to the aborigines
man's place in his environment, and his inter-relationship with
the "Divine" Beings who are possessed of the power of animation
and are the seat of knowledge.

796 Several interesting points are raised in our description of Kunapipi
ritual.

In all Kunapipi ceremonies, throughout the whole region mentioned
in Chapter II, basic words referring to the sacred objects,
ceremonies, and so on, are very much the same; for instance,
[184] *nanggaru, kanala, jelmalandji, djamala, gumagu,* and *djepalmandji.*
These terms serve as a connecting link, for their meanings do not
change drastically from one area to another, even when, as at Yirrkalla,
the Kunapipi ritual itself has been superimposed on a relatively
indigenous theme. The dominating theory behind the Kunapipi
has preserved, more or less intact, its original intent.

562 Another outstanding aspect is the important rôle undertaken by
women throughout the performance of the Kunapipi ceremonies.
796 At no time do they feel themselves secluded from purely male
activity, while at intervals they take an active part. They know that
the rituals are principally concerned with peculiarly feminine functions,
and that men are carrying out the more strenuous features of
ceremonial life. "These rituals," said one informant, "are just like a
man copulating with a woman, he does all the hard working so that
the woman can carry out the really important business of childbirth."
This may be a one-sided attitude, but it does adequately
express local native reasoning in this matter. The question of
whether women are profane, as opposed to the aura of sacredness
pervading a male participant at such a ceremony, does not enter into
Yirrkalla thinking. Even when ritually tabu because of afterbirth or
[841] menstruation blood (as in the case of the Wauwalak at the sacred
Muruwul billabong), a woman is regarded as sacred, for her blood
and her other activities themselves are sacred, and are focal points
in the religious doctrine. And all sacred ceremony, these aborigines
[773] say, was inspired by women. "In the beginning men had nothing, and
women possessed all the ritual; so men stole this from the women
..."—(Djanggawul and Wauwalak mythology).

. . ." — (Djanggawul and Wauwalak mythology). In any case, a cult 562
such as the Kunapipi, which stresses fertility and reproduction, could 796
not exclude women; as is normal in these matters, a certain sphere
of ceremonial activity is allotted to each sex, while the women realize 794
the important part played by their divine counterpart, the Wauwalak.

In the Kunapipi, however, women enter the sacred ground of the men; this is a feature that rarely occurs in the ceremonies associated with other cults. Upon entering the ground, the women themselves become more definitely *marelin* (sacred); "they take over from the men, and dance before them as if the men were only novices being introduced to their first sacred rituals". They re-enact something of what they themselves initially possessed in the mythological period, and what was stolen by the men. They use the sacred symbol of Julunggul, and the tree that was split by his lightning, and through their actions they represent the origin of the men's sacred bullroarer which no woman is supposed to see. They dance the ritual of the great Python, "and the men hang their heads in fear".[17]

On the termination of this ceremony, the women dance the lewd bandicoot dance on the sacred ground before the men, expressing symbolically the basic intent of the Kunapipi. They are stimulating both themselves and the men in order to carry out sexual intercourse, for copulation is the means by which fertility is achieved.

This brings us to an aspect that cannot be considered in detail 794
here; that is, the problem of religious sexuality.[18] By this we mean 796
the degree in which sex, as a stimulatory factor, enters into Kunapipi
ritual. In most sacred aboriginal cult life, where sexual subjects are 831
dealt with frankly and freely, there is no suggestion of actual individual stimulation, or of arousing the sexual inclinations of the participants: the ritual merely re-enacts some specific aspect of mythology which is related to erotic activity or coitus, and which is necessary for its effective completion, and for achieving the desired intent. The actors only carry out the symbolism associated with sexual activity. The arousing of sexual desire by sacred acting of this type would project into it a profane and irreligious content that
would immediately detract from its real intent. Allowance for sexual
stimulation by dancing, acting and singing has been made in the case [832]
of love magic ritual, or of collective male and female secular cere- [786]
monies that heighten sexual feelings and permit licence.

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[17] This ceremony held by the women is similar to their secret magico-religious
rituals in central-western Northern Territory. It is one aspect of the *tjarada*, [184]
which has its sacred and secular expressions. From these secret rituals of the
women, men are traditionally, and in present practice, excluded. *Vide* C. H. [113]
Berndt, *Women's Changing Ceremonies in Northern Australia*, L'Homme,
Cahiers d'Ethnologie, de Geographie et de Linguistique, I, Paris, 1950,
pp. 1-85, text figs. See particularly Chapter V.

[18] *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Section XII.

794 In the Kunapipi, however, a certain degree of sexual stimulation
does occur, and is apparently sanctified, although it does not detract
796 from the underlying religious content of the ritual. Sexual expression
832 in the Kunapipi is conventionalized, and individual inclinations are channelized according to recognized standards and rules. There is no suggestion of an uncontrolled orgy; men and women, prior to and during ceremonial copulation, are stimulated to an inordinate degree, but they find an outlet for this in coitus with defined Kunapipi partners. Furthermore, this is not idle sensuality, catering merely for individual pleasure. And although this aspect is found outside the sacred ground in the Kunapipi ceremonial period, during intercourse between men and women who may or may not be Kunapipi partners, the sexual act is in this case unrelated to ritual or ceremony and is simply secular. On the sacred ground, between Kunapipi partners, the sexual act assumes sanctity: the participants are invested with a sacred aura, while the act itself is ritualized and substantiated by the religious doctrine. The act of coitus is carried out for a specific purpose; and individual pleasure, whether present or not, is incidental.

CHAPTER V

KUNAPIPI RITUAL IN DRAWING

In order to understand more fully certain parts of the Kunapipi 532 ritual that have been already outlined, a series of interpretative 796 drawings was obtained from aborigines. Each of these depicts in conventionalized form some aspects of the Kunapipi, and includes some points which the artist considered to be of major importance in understanding the function of the rituals. The six drawings illustrated and described here cover the main points of the Kunapipi ceremony.

Ceremonial elders and headmen at Yirrkalla delegated a middle-aged man, named Gumuk,[1] a Kunapipi leader, to prepare the follow- [624] ing series of drawings on Kunapipi ritual. It is not the practice of these people to record their ceremonies in this way; normally, to demonstrate or expound some particular point, they would enact the ceremony instead of drawing it; neither would they attempt to draw such incidents on stringy-bark, the usual medium for expressing sacred or secular design and representation. The medium employed in these drawings was entirely foreign to the artist, who is accus- [126] tomed to working in ochres with hair or root brushes, on a bark board; but, in this case, sheets of brown paper and coloured lumber crayons were adopted for convenience. It was not long before the native artists had adjusted themselves to this method of expression, and produced what we may term masterpieces, equal to the best of the bark-drawing which is their traditional form of art.[2]

Their value as artistic representations of this particular culture is incidental here to their value as documents illustrating the Kunapipi rituals. Through them we may see with a native's eyes what the people as a group, through the individual artist, consider important in this respect.

Photographs of ritual and ceremony record accurately specific incidents divorced to some extent from the whole; they are in themselves impersonal. But drawings of the same or similar incidents, by

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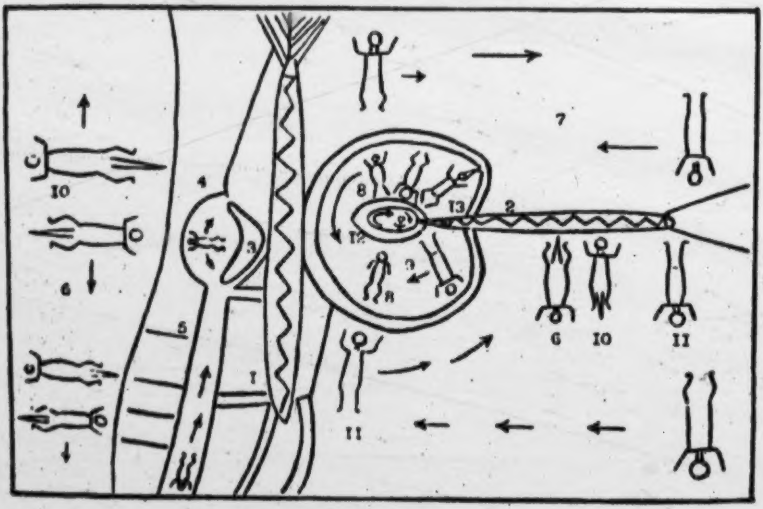
[1] *Vide* Chapter VI, where some of his dreams are discussed.

[2] Collections of both bark and brown paper drawings are at present housed in the Department of Anthropology, University of Sydney, for the Australian National Research Council.

For discussion of bark painting, see *Art in Arnhem Land*, by A. P. Elkin, R. and C. Berndt, pp. 61–83

532 796 aborigines belonging to the culture from which the ritual has sprung or in which it finds expression, reveal a depth of feeling and understanding which cannot be reconstructed through any other medium. Photographs, with all their accurate detail, cannot record the ritual with the same wealth of meaning as that contained in a native's drawing of this kind: and their anthropological value must not be underestimated. Observational recording through photography is valuable and necessary, but it lacks the ability of indigenous drawing to make its subject matter personal, vivid and sympathetic.

To describe in some detail each drawing illustrated here, rough sketches have been reproduced; the main outline of each corresponds to the original, so that the numbered sections may readily be traced in sequence, from text to rough sketch and so to reproduction of the original drawing illustrated. This was considered preferable to numbering the various parts of the original drawings.



Text Figure 2.

Key Sketch to illustrate Plate XI.

Postulants and novices in a ritual performance on the sacred Kunapipi ground.

532 796 881 The first drawing,[3] illustrated in Plate XI and text figure 2, in red, black, green, blue and yellow crayon, white chalk and pencil, presents postulants and novices in a ritual performance on the sacred Kunapipi ground. 1 is the *darlpa* snake *jelmalandji* emblem, which is sometimes said to be both the Julunggul python and the pandanus tree; 2 is the *gundaru* Lighting Snake *jelmalandji*, which is the

[3] Reference: No. 1, Series B, *Field-Notes*, Book 28, Series A, R. Berndt.

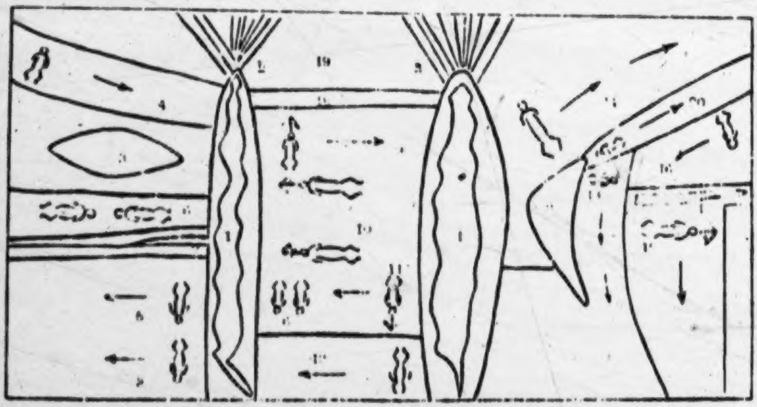
Julunggul; both are topped with feathered ornaments. The *gundaru* 532
jelmalandji arises from the *nanggaru* place (9), while the *darlpa* 796
jelmalandji arises some little distance away, between the *nanggaru*
and the *kanala* (3): in actual practice, both would stand together 881
beside either the *nanggaru* or the *kanala*. On the concave side of the *kanala* (3) are ranged *jiritja* moiety *wari* novices (4) for the Kunapipi, while along the track leading to the *kanala* are *muru dua* moiety novices (5): they do not yet enter the crescent trench.

Parallel to the *kanala*, and to one side of the *nanggaru*, are *dua* dancing postulants (6) representing opossums. This is the important Kunapipi opossum dancing; men with long paperbark penes (10) attached to their waist-bands, or constructed upon their own penes, are male opossums; the others are the females (11). In the dancing they simulate sexual intercourse, erecting their bark penes, and so on.

On the opposite side of the *nanggaru* are *jiritja* moiety *keiango:r* [616]
men (7) who watch the erecting of the *jelmalandji*. This is the group that prepared these emblems for the *dua* moiety (6).

Within the *nanggaru* (9), the opossum actors (6) are seen dancing, having gradually moved up along the sacred ground and entered the "billabong" (12). Then they emerge from the *nanggaru* and encircle it (8); they begin to cover it in with their dancing feet, destroying it completely. One dancing opossum actor (13) wears a conical- [292]
shaped head-dress topped with feathers, as should all the other participants.

The second drawing,[4] Plate I and text figure 3, in red, blue,



Text Figure 3.

Key Sketch to illustrate Plate I.

Opossum dancing on the sacred ground, with destruction of the Snake Emblems.

[4] Reference: No. 109, *Field Notes*, Book 18, Series A, R. Berndt.

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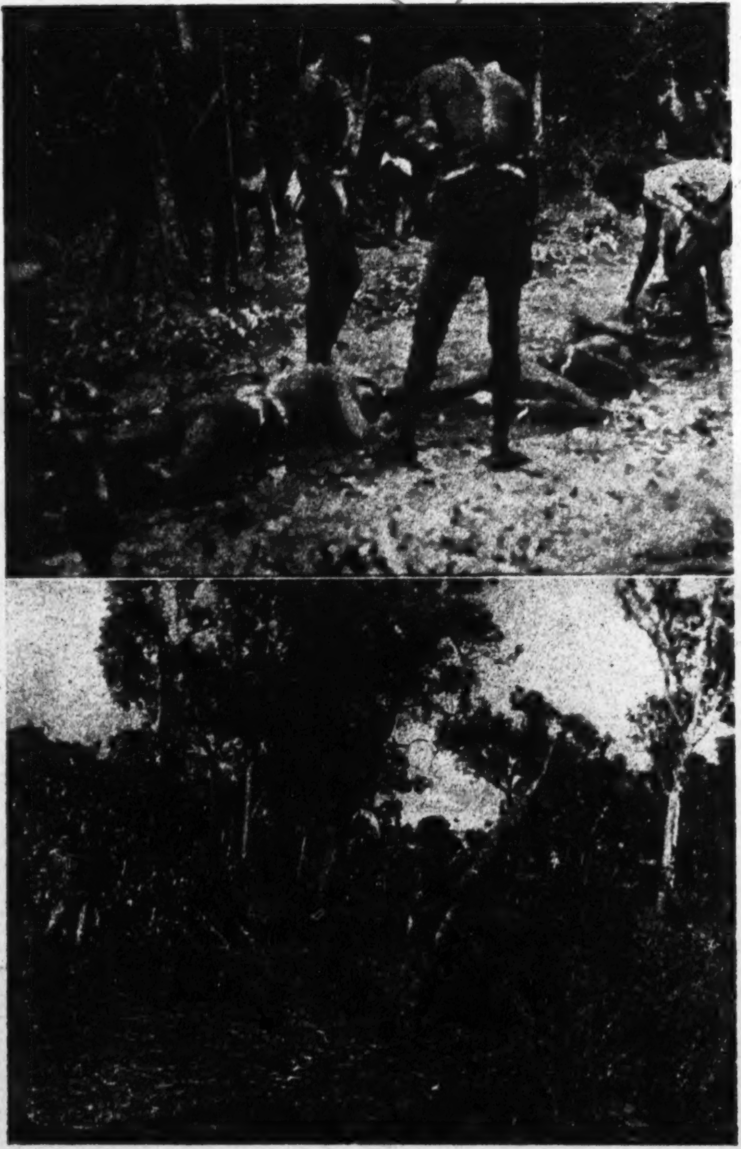

[facing p.64]

PLATE VI

[For caption see category 116, p. xi]

532 881 796 yellow, black and green crayon, concerns the final opossum dancing, and the destroying of the *jelmalandji* emblems.

One *jelmalandji* (1 *a*) is the *gundaru*, and the other (1 *b*) the *darlpa*, each topped with feathers. The non-sacred term for the *gundaru jelmalandji* is *nungganambi*, and for the *darlpa jelmalandji*, *murungun* or *dalara*, both of which may be used before women and children in the main camp: to use the term *jelmalandji* in a secular environment would bring sickness on the speaker. To the right of the *gundaru* is the *kanala* (2) crescent trench; to the left of the *darlpa* is the *nanggaru*, (3), and on one side of this a row of *wari jiritja* novices (4) make their appearance, wearing *marapipi* headbands: they watch two actors (6) on the opposite side of the *nanggaru*, performing the *dua* moiety *gundaru* snake dance (of the male and female Julunggul Snakes). While the two actors dance, the *jiritja* bullroarer (7) is swung behind them; below it are the *muru dua* novices (5); and below these, in a line, are the "big" men (8) who act as guardians to the novices, and take them to the Kunapipi dancing. These guardians are very strict, and may beat the novices in their charge should they misbehave.

[292] Between the two *jelmalandji* is a row of dancing postulants (9), representing the *gulwiri* "cabbage" or "wild coconut" palm, which swayed in the running waters at Muruwul (*vide* Chapter III). The actors wear elaborate head-dresses that symbolize this tree, and later they dance towards the *murlk* hut (19) of the two Wauwalak sisters. Opposite this row of dancers is another row (11), also representing the *gulwiri* palm. Between them (10) lie two other *gulwiri* dancers performing a ritual dance: they enter the ground kneeling, and lie upon one another "like the roots and trunks of these trees", entwined and rubbing together with the force of the running water. These two central actors, as well as the others, are watched by the *wari* and *muru* novices, who have been brought up to take another position facing the dancing ground. Two novices (6) are beside the *gulwiri* actors (11), while the others are ranged in a row below (12).

Above the track leading to the *kanala* (2) and on its concave side are ranged *muru* and *wari* novices (13), taking their positions for viewing the final opossum dancing and the *jelmalandji*. To one side (14) are their guardians; the novices (16) below the *kanala* track are standing with their hands tucked under their arms.

On the concave side of the *kanala*, beyond the novices (13), is a row of dancing men performing the *gunga* pandanus dance, with head-dresses similar to those used in the *gulwiri*. When this is completed, other neophytes begin to dance down the *kanala* track (20): they are opossums, and this track is also called the "opossum track".

The *jelmalandji* are pushed and fall over across the *kanala*; but they are caught with the stick (18), and impelled back, so that they

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
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PLATE VII

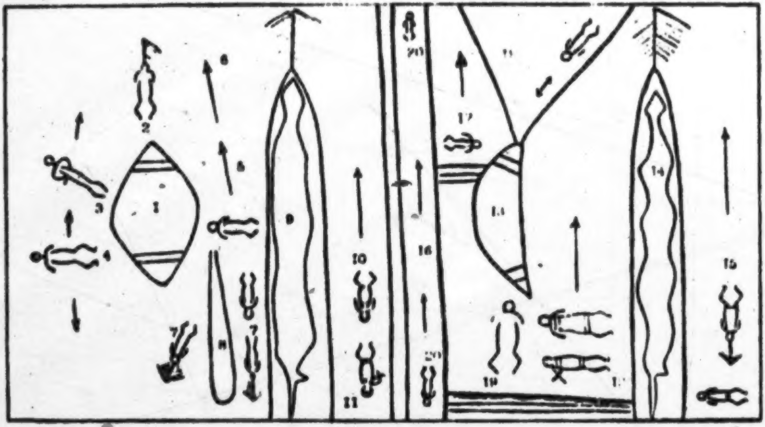
[facing p. 65]

[For captions see category 116, p. xi]

stand upright. This enacts the part of the myth relating how the 532
Julunggul fall backwards because they have swallowed the Wau-
walak (*vide* Chapter III): each time they fall, the postulants cry out. 796
"The Wauwalak make them fall, but they are strong and erect them- 881
selves again." Finally, however, they fall back into the *kanala*. This is not yet the final ceremony, so the *jelmalandji* are taken by two *jiritja* men and hidden for use in subsequent ritual. Normally, the pushing over of the *jelmalandji* should be followed by the fire-throwing ritual and their subsequent burning: after this the opossum dancers (20) should dance around the *kanala*, filling it in with the action of their feet, destroying the encircling mound, and thus covering the *jelmalandji*.

As the neophytes and novices leave the *kanala* the bullroarer (17) [534]
is swung, with answering calls from the main camp.

The third drawing,[5] Plate XII and text figure 4, in red, yellow, green, blue, black and white crayon, repeats some of the above and continues the ceremony to its final stage; but some essential ritual is omitted here (such as ceremonial coitus, which is dealt with separately).



Text Figure 4.

Key Sketch to illustrate Plate XII.

Sacred dancing on the Kunapipi ground.

On the left of the drawing is the *nanggaru* (1): above (2), is the *dua mo:goi* Ka'lerika'lering (*vide* Chapter IV *et seq.*) wearing a

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[5] Reference: No. 134, *Field-Notes*, Book 19, Series B, R. Berndt.

532 981 796 conical head-dress, called *wajamunu* or *dutji*, topped with feathers. He is dancing for the spirits of the Wauwalak who have been swallowed by Julunggul. Although the artist has projected this mythological Being on to the sacred ground, this represents really a *dua* neophyte taking the part of this Spirit in the Kunapipi dancing. On one side of this actor are two men (3) who are also Ka'lerika'lering; one has a boomerang, and both shake green branches as they dance.

Below the Ka'lerika'lering, on one side of the *nanggaru*, are the *wari* novices (4); while the *muru* novices (5) are on the opposite side. Above them are the *kakawar jiritja* postulants (6); these are older youths and men, visiting strangers from various clans, who have not yet seen the Kunapipi and are being admitted as "advanced novices".

On one side of the *darlpa* (or *dalara*) *jelmalandji* (9), are men (7) performing the pandanus dance, which is shown for the first time to the *wari*, *muru* and *kakawar*. As they dance, the bullroarer (8) is swung.

The *kakawar* (6) now move over to the opposite side of the *jelmalandji* (9) and form a row (10) under the direction of a headman (11), who rhythmically beats his sticks. The row of men move anti-clockwise, in a form of dancing called *wokwaijin*, around the *kanala* (13); the same men, with their leader (12), are again seen on the concave side of the *kanala*, before their entry into the crescent trench.

Opposite the *kanala* is the *gundaru jelmalandji* (14), with a row of men (15) performing the "cabbage" palm dancing. On the convex side of the *kanala* are the novices (17) observing the ritual dancing, while opossum men (18) dance down the track leading to the *kanala*, in order to encircle it and cover it up. Below the *kanala* is a postulant (19) performing the final dance on the sacred ground, before leaving for the fringe of the main camp. He represents the Blue-tongued Lizard (*djamalingu* or *gumaling*), and dances by himself.

The artist then depicts, in the centre of his drawing, a row of novices (4, 5, and 6) who are under the "shade" or branches of the *djepalmandji* (16); at each end, in the forked sticks, sit the *jiritja* guardians (20) calling out. This takes place on the fringe of the main camp, away from the sacred ground, and shows the novices getting ready just before the women arrive.

The fourth drawing,[6] Plate XVII and text figure 5, in green, red, black, thick pencil sketches of human figures, on a yellow background, is principally concerned with ceremonial intercourse, an integral part of the Kunapipi, taking place on the sacred ground. 532 796 881

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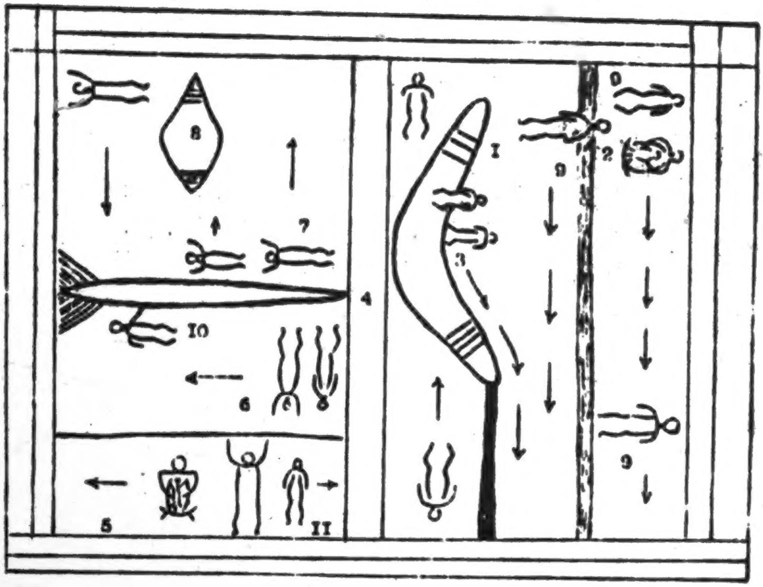
[6] Reference: No. 2, *Field-Notes*, Book 28, Series B, R. Berndt.



Text Figure 5.

Key Sketch to illustrate Plate XVII.

Ceremonial intercourse on the sacred ground.

On the right hand side of this drawing is the *jilparindji* or *kalawal* boomerang (1); it occupies the place of the *kanala* in the drawing and is drawn in much the same way. (This particular aspect requires further attention, but cannot be elaborated here.) It is this boomerang (usually designed a little differently, with a groove at the centre) which is used in ritual defloration on the Kunapipi ground, before ceremonial coitus. That is to say, young girls have their hymens pierced prior to intercourse on the ceremonial ground; others, whose hymens have already been broken through normal premarital coitus, have the end of the boomerang placed symbolically in the vagina. In the Rose River region, this form of defloration is a counterpart of the subincision rite, and neither takes place in the north-eastern part of Arnhem Land. In the long *jiritja* Rose River Love Song cycle, known at Yirrkalla, defloration and ritual copula- 532 796 881 833 [304] [836] [171]

537 tion are discussed in detail: this aspect will, however, be dealt with
796 later.[7]

833 Here we are concerned principally with sexual intercourse on the
sacred ground, and defloration is incidental; but it does have an
881 important bearing on Kunapipi mythology. (*Vide* Chapter X, Song
[773] 45, when it is mentioned that the Mungamunga were "opened" for
coitus; the ritual in the Rose River Kunapipi commemorates this
[171] mythological event, while other examples could be taken from Yirrkalla
mythology to substantiate this rite of defloration.)

On the far right hand side of the drawing are male *gurung* having coitus with their normally tabu-ed female *mukul* (*vide* Chapter IV), as Kunapipi sexual partners (2), while other men (9) await their turn. It is these men who first "open up" the young girls with the boomerang, and then copulate with them. This rite is termed the *nukanmiri*. The drawing of the man and woman performing the sexual act is executed in the stylized traditional manner, so that the two figures merge (2): the man bends forward, grasping his partner at the back so that his arms pass under hers, while the woman clasps him with hands gripped at his back. She is lying on the ground with legs apart, her thighs resting on his hips, and her feet are crossed at his back; *vide* Chapter IV. footnote 14.

Ranged along and around the boomerang (1) are the brothers (3)
of the girls and women with whom the men are copulating; they
stand with their backs turned. They do not look at their sisters having
[593] coitus, in case they should be "shamed" (a manifestation of the
deep-rooted local tabu between brother and sister). Instead, they
sing while this is taking place, and do not themselves have ceremonial
intercourse; their turn comes when the next Kunapipi is performed.

A focal point on the left hand side of the drawing is the *gundaru jelmalandji* (4), held by one man (10), while below it is a row of men (6) who are actual or classificatory husbands to the women having coitus on the opposite section (that is, 2). These husbands (like those at 9) await their turn with women (5) who are the "wives" (actual or otherwise) of the men on the opposite side (9); these women are already having coitus (5), and beside them (11) other men are waiting. Around the *nanggaru* (8) are men (7) dancing the opossum dance: they are the fathers (actual or classificatory) of both groups of women (at 5 and 2).

The fifth drawing,[8] Plate XIII and text figure 6, in black, red, green, blue, yellow and pencil, shows the sacred ground, with its essential emblems and plan: women are awaiting ceremonial intercourse,

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[7] *Vide* R. Berndt, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land*. In Chapter IV it was mentioned that only married women attended the Kunapipi ritual of ceremonial copulation; this was a Yirrkalla variant.

[8] Reference: No. 3, *Field-Notes*, Book 28, Series B, R. Berndt.

while there is no mention of defloration (which, as we have said, is not a feature of every Kunapipi).

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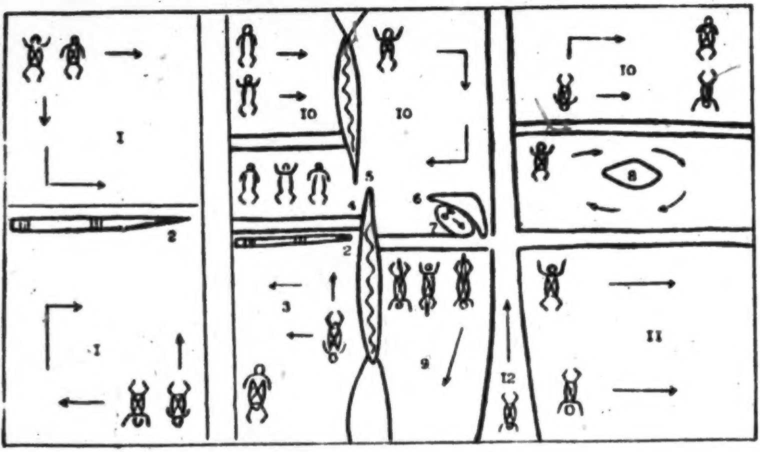

Text Figure 6.

Key Sketch to illustrate Plate XIII.

Men dancing on the sacred ground, with women awaiting ceremonial intercourse.

On the left hand side of the drawing, ranged on either side, are men dancing (1); in the middle is the stick (2) used for pushing back the *jelmalandji* when they fall. They belong to both the *jiritja* and the *dua* moieties, and have blood smeared over their bodies; this symbolises the afterbirth and menstruation blood of the Wauwalak sisters.

In the central panel, to one side of the *darlpa jelmalandji* (4), are *dua* women (3), decorated like the men with fibre string crossed over their chest and body. They are awaiting ceremonial coitus and represent female opossums; they wear *diridiri* pubic aprons. On the opposite side are their Kunapipi sexual partners (9), representing male opossums, wearing long penes of paperbark.

Above is the *gundaru jelmalandji* (5), surrounded by dancing men (10) smeared with blood. In the corner is the *kanala* (6), with *muru* and *wari* novices (7) lying covered with sheets of paper-bark on the concave side. The sacred dancing and the *jelmalandji* have not yet been revealed to them.

On the right hand side is the *nanggaru* (8) with the same men (10) dancing around it, while below are others, also dancing (11). Along the track (12) leading to the *kanala* (6) are opossum men, dancing to surround the novices (7).

532 The sixth and final drawing,[9] Plate XIV and text figure 7, in black,
796 green, yellow, red, and blue, represents the last stage of the Kunapipi.

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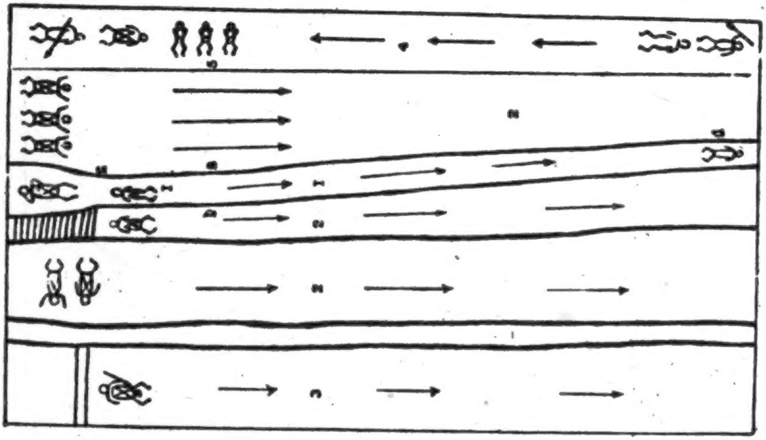

Text Figure 7.

Key Sketch to illustrate Plate XIV.
The last stage of the Kunapipi.

Across the centre of the drawing (1) is the *djepalmandji*, with its two rails (1 *a* and *b*) supported at either end on forked sticks (1 *c* and *d*). In each forked stick sits a *jiritja* man, repeatedly calling out. Under the boughs and branches strewn over the rails are the *wari* and *muru*.

Below the *djepalmandji* is a row of *jiritja* and *dua* dancing men (2); they move around the *djepalmandji*. On either side of the *djepalmandji* are other men (2) dancing. Further below, a row of men (3) wearing opossum-fur pubic coverings, and carrying spears, dances on to the *djepalmandji* ground. Above, a row of men (4) leads some novices (5) towards the forked stick "shade". The ground is now arranged ready for the entry of the women, who are called by the two *jiritja* men sitting in the forks of the *djepalmandji*.

These drawings, then, reveal concisely the main features of the
[171] Kunapipi ceremonies. They show striking similarity to a collection
of Kunapipi (Kalwadi) drawings obtained in the central-western
part of the Northern Territory.

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[9] Reference: No. 4, Series B, *Field-Notes*, Book 28, R. Berndt.

CHAPTER VI

KUNAPIPI DREAMS

Kunapipi ritual and ideology, like all other aspects of native life 121 and thought, find expression through the medium of dreams. The study of these requires not only personal acquaintance with the individuals whose dreams are recorded, but also sound knowledge of their cultural and traditional background. Their behaviour patterns must be compared with those of other representatives of the group; all social factors likely to contribute towards a particular dream should be analysed, and the individual's personality and psychological approach taken into consideration. In addition, the natives' own theory and interpretations of dreams must be considered.

For several months, at Yirrkalla, the dreams of a number of adult 124 males were recorded daily. During the initial period of field-work, it was necessary to have approximately thirty male informants, each chosen for some specific reason; one was a headman of a certain [115] linguistic group, another an artist, a wood-carver, a song-man, a leader of the Djanggawul or of the Kunapipi rituals, and so on. With such a group readily available it was convenient to record their dreams each morning while studying their social background. At the [123] same time an intimacy grew up between the field-worker and the informants, so that mental reservations were reduced to a minimum. Detailed case-histories of each individual were compiled over the period of work, and the sequence of events within the social group was observed in relation to their dreams; these events were apparently modified or accentuated according to a man's peculiar background and associations. What had begun as a tentative experiment devel- [177] oped into an important aspect of study, which revealed the natives' psychological adjustment to their society under the impact of Misson and European contact. However, it was found necessary after a certain period to restrict the time spent on this work, since it had shown a tendency to dominate, and even in part to exclude, other aspects of equal if not greater importance.

It was however of great value to have this opportunity of studying 124 hundreds of dreams, recorded in sequence, of a number of these 159 aborigines, and to observe the wide range of subjects concerned, 787 together with the themes which reflected each man's particular

124 159 787 approach to life. The dreams ranged from long mundane narratives, relating food-collecting exploits, to matters of sacred concern, sexual adventures, feuds and fighting, spirits, Spirit-Landings (referring to the conception of a wife or some female relative), sickness and death, and dreams reflecting Mission contact, showing conflict between the indigenous and the introduced culture. The most important of these were those of Mission contact, contrasting the native religion with Christianity, and introducing fantastic conceptions of God, Jesus and the missionaries. On the other hand, a great many of these dreams were concerned primarily with indigenous religion, and it is these dreams that have assumed great importance to the natives themselves. Men "dream out" the meanings of their sacred ritual, coming spiritually into direct contact with the Ancestral Beings. They perform the rituals in dreams, use sacred emblems in unconventional ways, and also dream additions to their rituals and totemic designs, additions, of course, based on traditional patterns. Many sacred designs are altered and added to because of dreams, although the original totemic pattern is retained. Sacred songs, too, are influenced directly and indirectly by dreaming; for the Ancestral Being who has inspired a particular song-cycle may suggest an addition or modification to a headman during a dream.

124 787 159 828 The natives' own interpretation of their dreams, apart from those which have a bearing on the sacred life, varies considerably. It may reflect a man's brooding over an event, or thinking about someone: "I was thinking about such and such, and dreamt this"; "I was worrying about so and so and dreamt about them"; "My child is sick, and I dreamt this" (often something apparently quite unrelated to the supposed "cause" of dreaming). A death in the camp will inspire most men and women to dream about the deceased's spirit, about some other death (in the past or the future), about mortuary ceremonies, clan songs and the Spirit Lands of the dead.

A man's dissatisfaction with his marital arrangements will be expressed through a series of sexual dreams, while an elopement in the camp will produce dreams relating to feuds and fighting, quarrels and arguments, or allegoric dreams through which such events are said to be mirrored. Other dreams portend future events. But when camp life is running smoothly, involved dreams of a secular or sacred nature are interpreted as, "I was hungry last night and dreamt that"; or, "I was worrying over some tobacco"; or, "Someone stole my supper"; and so on. These interpretations, as for the Kunapipi dreams which follow, are often put forward irrespective of the context of the dream. The performance of large ceremonies like the *dua* and *jiritja nara*, the Wauwalak rituals and the like, when the whole camp participates, produces among both men and women a crop of dreams that relate mainly to the relevant rituals, although a mass of contradictory interpretative material is put forward.

Dreams are rarely "extraordinary"[1] when they occur in Yirrkalla 124
life; they are related to the ordinary round of events, and are definitely not placed in the category of the supernatural. They are an 787
adjunct of normal and conventional living; and just as a man's body 159
and spirit have experiences in the waking life, so the spirit (separated 828
now from material ties) has similar experiences (within the range of an individual's knowledge) in the dreaming sphere, where time and space are ignored. The aborigines' theory is that the spirit, during sleep, is released from the body, and during a dream wanders in timeless space, into the stream of the Eternal Dreamtime.

* * * *

We may turn now to our main theme, the Kunapipi dreams, for 794
the general question of Yirrkalla dream life requires a separate study. 794

Only three Kunapipi dreams will be considered here: these, among 159
the many hundreds of dreams recorded, were the only ones really
relevant to this discussion. Most of those dreams which referred to 787
sacred and ceremonial aspects were associated with other Wauwalak rituals, like the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak*, but more particularly with the "higher" sacred emblems and ritual of Djanggawul, Laintjung and Banaitja and so on. The reason for this paucity of Kunapipi dreams is possibly that this cult has not as yet a really firm grip of the people's minds, as have more typically indigenous forms. It consists, as we have said, of introduced ritual superimposed on traditional mythology, and from that consideration alone would not be so deeply ingrained in the culture as other and far older local rituals. On the other hand, the three dreams set out here were inspired by lengthy conversations on various aspects of the Kunapipi. Later, when certain Kunapipi ceremonies were in operation, and a great many people of both sexes were brought into the sphere of its influence, it was not possible to record dreams. We may assume, however, that the performance of the Kunapipi would produce related dreaming; for while other ceremonies were being held, it was found that all those concerned invariably had relevant dreams. An important adjunct in the study of native religious life should be the analysis of informants' and participants' dreams; this should not be confined to one sex alone, for we have shown elsewhere the important part played by women, particularly in the Fertility cults, and their dreams reflect their approach to ceremonial (as well as to secular) life.

These Kunapipi dreams belonged to two men. One was Banggalawi,[2] a *dua* Djambarpingu *mata*, Ralwia *mala* man, a middle-aged 159
ceremonial headman, well versed in both Djanggawul and Wauwalak 787
ritual, and a leader of the Milingimbi Kunapipi side. The other 794

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[1] L. Warner's Appendix on Dreams (*op. cit.* pp. 511-12) is inadequate. 796

[2] The Bengaliwe of L. Warner, *op. cit.* pp. 68, 182 *et seq.*

The other
159 was Gumuk (*vide* Chapter V), an unmarried middle-aged *jiritja*
787 Dalwongu *mata*, Biringal *mala* man, who had homo-sexual tenden-
794 cies but did engage in normal sex relations. Most of his attention was
focused on sacred ritual; he was the representative of the Rose
796 River Kunapipi, to the local headmanship of which he aspired.
[838] Since we are interested here only in the actual context of the dreams,
as an aid to amplifying our previous chapter on ritual, we will not
set out the case histories of these men; this would be necessary only
if we were analysing fully the dream sequences of each man over the
full period of recording. Both these informants were able men,
fully acquainted with all aspects of Kunapipi ritual, and qualified to
interpret its symbols and conventional expressions.

First comes the translation of Banggalawi's dream.[3]

"I was dreaming about Kunapipi. We had gone out to the sacred ground, where we made a *kanala* (the *ba'uma* of Chapter IV). We opened the veins of our arms and poured the blood into a large shell, and began to stick eagle-hawk down around our waists. When we had finished decorating, we *dua* men got up and 'took dancing' for those *gulwiri* palms.

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[3] Reference: Book 18, Series A, Feb. 5th, 1947, R.B.

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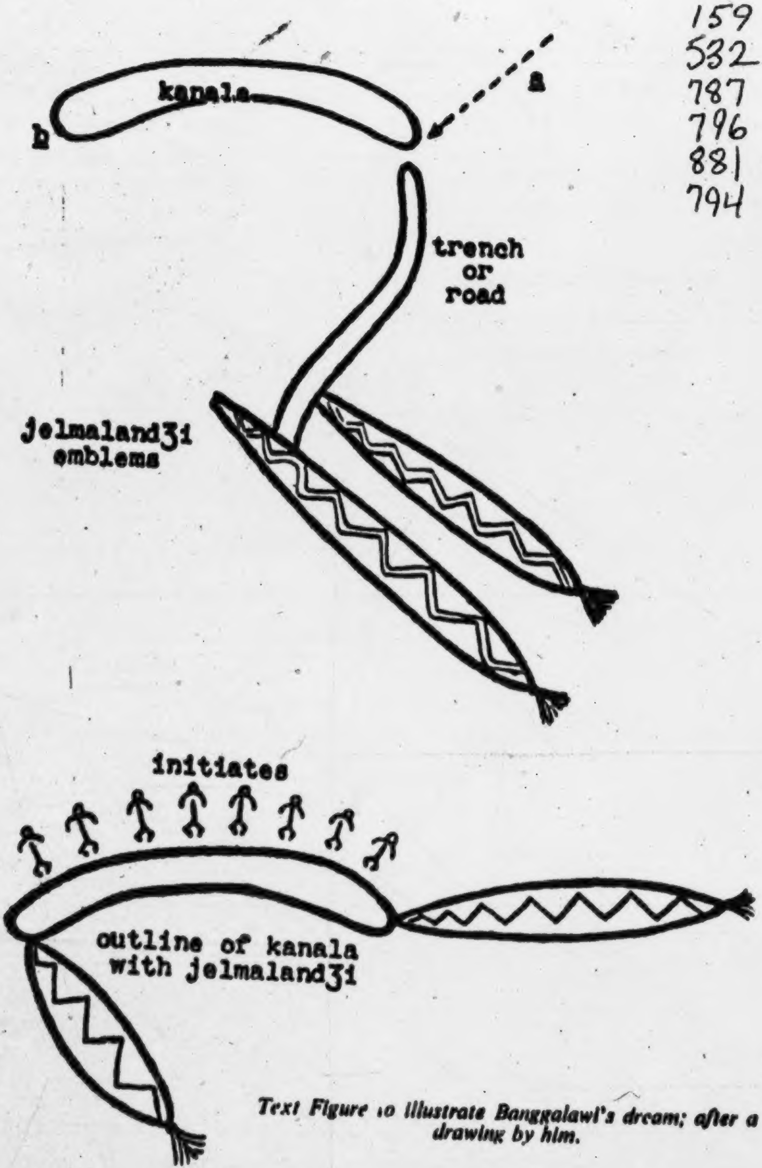
a
b
kanala
trench or road
jelmalandʒi emblems
initiates
outline of kanala with jelmalandʒi

Text Figure to illustrate Banggalawi's dream; after a drawing by him.

159 787 796 "We, that is Mo:ra (a *dua* Dadawi *mata*, Kapin *mala* man), Mo:ra's young brother (dead), some other *dua* men, and I 'walked' (along *a* in text figure 8), paused, and shook the branches tied to our forearms; we went on into the *kanala*, and huddled together. While in there, we called out twice; then we came out, and stood alongside the *kanala* (at *b*).

"Then we returned to the main camp and slept.

"Next morning, we went back to the sacred ground and the *kanala*, and re-decorated ourselves with blood and feather down. Then we 'took' new 'spring' water dancing, and came into the main part of the ground (along *a*), shaking our branches, and 'going inside' the *kanala*. We sang out from in there, and emerged (at *b*). Then we danced the Lightning Snake and the Yellow Snake, going into the *kanala* each time. When we had finished these, we rested.

"After that we walked down the 'road' (or trench, at *c*), until we reached a group of *jiritja* men standing round the *jelmalandji*. All the *jiritja* moved back (to *a*) and 'took' opossum dancing; they came (down *a*) and began to dance around the *kanala*, 'rubbing it out so nobody could see'. They kept on dancing until it was completely covered, and then went over and stood by the *jelmalandji*.

159 787 796 881 "They carried the *jelmalandji* over to what had been the *kanala*, and placed one at each end, standing them upright in the ground (as in the lower part of the illustrated text figure marked 2). All the young boys who were initiates were then brought on to the ground; the *dua* boys, *muru*, came in one bunch, and the *jiritja* boys, *wari* (or *waril*), came in another bunch. They were placed on one side (the convex side) of the *kanala*, and told to lie down as if they were asleep: men covered them with blankets. They had not seen the *jelmalandj* when they were brought in, for their guardians had their hands held over the boys' eyes.

"Then we sang for a while and danced, until our singing changed; I was leading the singing, beating on my sticks. We threw off the boys' coverings, and told them to look up at the *jelmalandji*. We showed them these sacred posts, and sang and danced all night till just before sunrise. When the sun was getting up, we opened our veins again and let out blood. And this blood we smeared all over the boys' bodies, and over the men. Then we put *marapipi* bands on their foreheads. We smeared more blood over the boys.

[291] "We undid their *naga* (loin cloths) and put bark-fibre from the *daranggulp* 'coffee' tree around their waists, and branches of green leaves in front like a pubic apron. We plucked *maipi*, ironwood tree, branches and tied them on the boys' arms at the elbows and shoulders, on their thighs and on their legs below the knees. We sang over them as we do in the Kunapipi.

"When they were all ready, we took them to the *djepalmani* (that is, *djepalmandji*) that had been erected on the edge of the main camp,

on the way to the sacred ground, and we put those boys under the 159
branches and covered them up. The *jiritja* men were sitting in the
forks of the *djepalmani*, and calling out. I was walking around beat- 787
ing my sticks and singing. 796

"The women came towards the *djepalmani* and sat around it. 881 And the two *jiritja* men were calling out, because that Snake had swallowed the Wauwalak sisters.

"And just at that moment, we all became *wonga:r* Dreaming people. All the women who had been sitting there, around the *djepalmani*, had been swallowed by the Snake; for the *jelmalandji* had come down from the sacred ground and turned into Julunggul. Some of us who were *wonga:r* were brothers of the women who had been swallowed. We brothers were looking around for our sisters: 'Where have our sisters gone?' We began to cry out, 'Where are you, our sisters?' And as we were calling, the Julunggul, or *jelmalandji*, vomited all the women so that they fell back into the places where they had been sitting around the *djepalmani*. And the white ants came up to them and bit them and made them alive. 'Ah, our sisters are back,' we cried out. And we changed back from being *wonga:r* people, and we began to sing out ritually because of this.

"We said to the women, 'Look at our *djepalmani*. See the flying foxes sitting in the forks of the tree: they are hanging there. And that rail across from one forked post to the other is a straight branch; and under that straight branch, all the young flying foxes are hanging covered with foliage'. (These are the initiates holding on to the rail under cover of branches, beneath the *djepalmani*.)

"And I came into this cleared place in front of the women and the *djepalmani*, calling out like a man coming after those flying foxes, hunting them, shaking the forked posts as I would shake a tree full of flying foxes. That means that these flying foxes see me and fly over from that tree. And the two men in the forks, who were flying foxes, cried out from their branches; and all the other men danced in, like men coming to hunt the flying foxes.

"All the women changed back to *wonga:r* women and became the Wauwalak sisters; only these were not two, but many. They held yam sticks, just like the Wauwalak sisters did. They cried out for the boys in the *djepalmani*, '*wa ! wa ! wa !*' and the sound of it flew in all directions. Then we men danced in again and circled around them and the *djepalmani*. But just as we began to dance, I awoke".

The informant commented that he dreamt this Kunapipi dream [828]
because he had been talking a lot about the Kunapipi rituals and the
ngu:rlmak (some ceremonies in the latter concern flying foxes); he had been thinking and worrying about them, wondering when they could be held, and so his dream was a natural outcome of this.

The dream itself needs little interpretation, for its description of 159 787
the ritual varies little from what has already been described. The 796

159 destruction of the *kanala* before the showing of the *jelmalandji* to the
787 initiates is an unusual feature, while the performance of ceremonial
796 copulation which should have taken place after the *jelmalandji*
ritual and before the *djepalmani* was omitted altogether. The real meaning of the *djepalmani* (*djepalmandji*) with its forked sticks is not mentioned, since it is identified as the tree in which flying foxes hang. This is the usual way in which the men try to "trick" the women, to hide the real meaning (see description of ritual in Chapter IV). But Banggalawi stressed this aspect, owing to his concern about the *ngu:rlmak* flying fox rituals, which for various reasons had not been held for several years.

The most interesting aspect of the dream is the transposition of the characters, together with Banggalawi himself, from contemporary to *wonga:r* beings. The *jelmalandji*, which are really Julunggul in spirit form, become the *wonga:r* Python who swallows the women, just as Julunggul swallowed the Wauwalak in the myth. Banggalawi identifies himself and the other characters in the dream as being participants in the Wauwalak myth: it is no longer ritual, but actual *wonga:r* happening, and they themselves are the *wonga:r*. Then they change back to ordinary people performing the Kunapipi. Towards the end of the dream the women revert to *wonga:r*, and are the Wauwalak themselves—not just the Two Sisters of the myth, but dozens of female counterparts, who are all Wauwalak. This aspect of a person's absolute identification with the Ancestral or Totemic Beings is not uncommon, nor found only in the realm of dreams. On the sacred ground, when actors perform totemic dances, it is said that the spirit of the totem (or Ancestral Being) enters the neophytes and they become possessed; during the period of a man's dancing he is the sacred being, for his whole personality is absorbed by that of the *wonga:r*. It is this type of identification which takes place in the above dream.

The next dream is Gumuk's.[4]

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[4] Reference: Book 18, Series A, Feb. 3rd, 1947, R.B.

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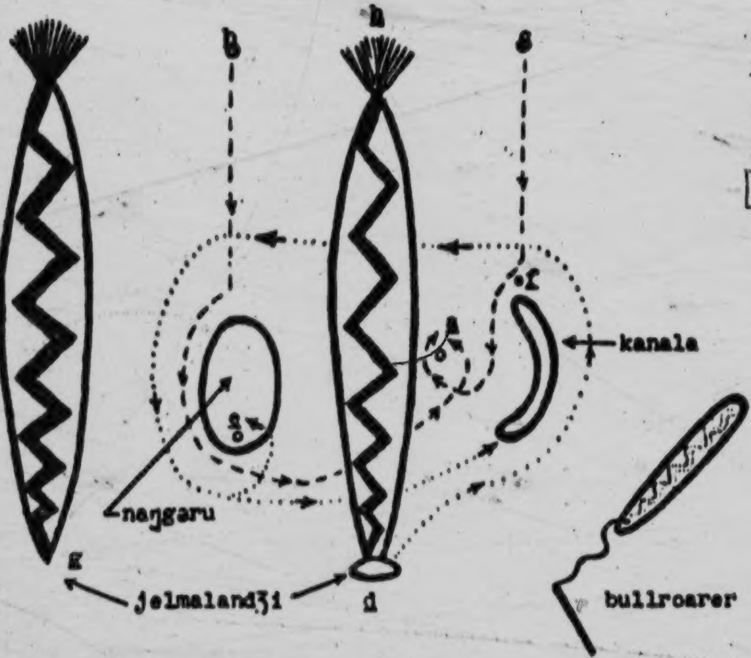

Text Figure 9 to illustrate a dream by Gumuk: after a drawing by him.

"I was dreaming Kunapipi side. I was standing (at *a*, in text figure 9 illustrated here) in the sacred ground, calling out; twice I called out. When I had finished, a lot of men and young boys (that is, initiates) came down the ground. They came in two lines (*b* and *c*), both being *ngulkaru* (that is, 'strangers' or Kunapipi visitors), and among the men were the *wari* (*jiritja* initiates). One lot (*b*) came down and around the *nanggaru* billabong, while the other lot (*c*) moved down past the *kanala* 'river' (that is, uterus trench) and surrounded me (at *a*). The *wari* went down to *d* below the *jelmalandji*, and were covered up by the old men ('the people who look after the sacred grounds'). You see the *jelmalandji* in my drawing (that is text figure 9), well, that is Julunggul swallowing the young boys; you see it rising up above them. In my dream the *jelmalandji* is 'alive' like that big Snake.

"Over by the *nanggaru* (at *e*) was standing Djuwalji (a *jiritja* Gumaitj *mata* man). And as the people surrounded me (at *a*), I walked over (to *f*) and stood there on one end of the *kanala* mound. From there I sang out for all that lot below the *jelmalandji* (at *d*); they moved forward (out of Julunggul) and encircled the *kanala* and

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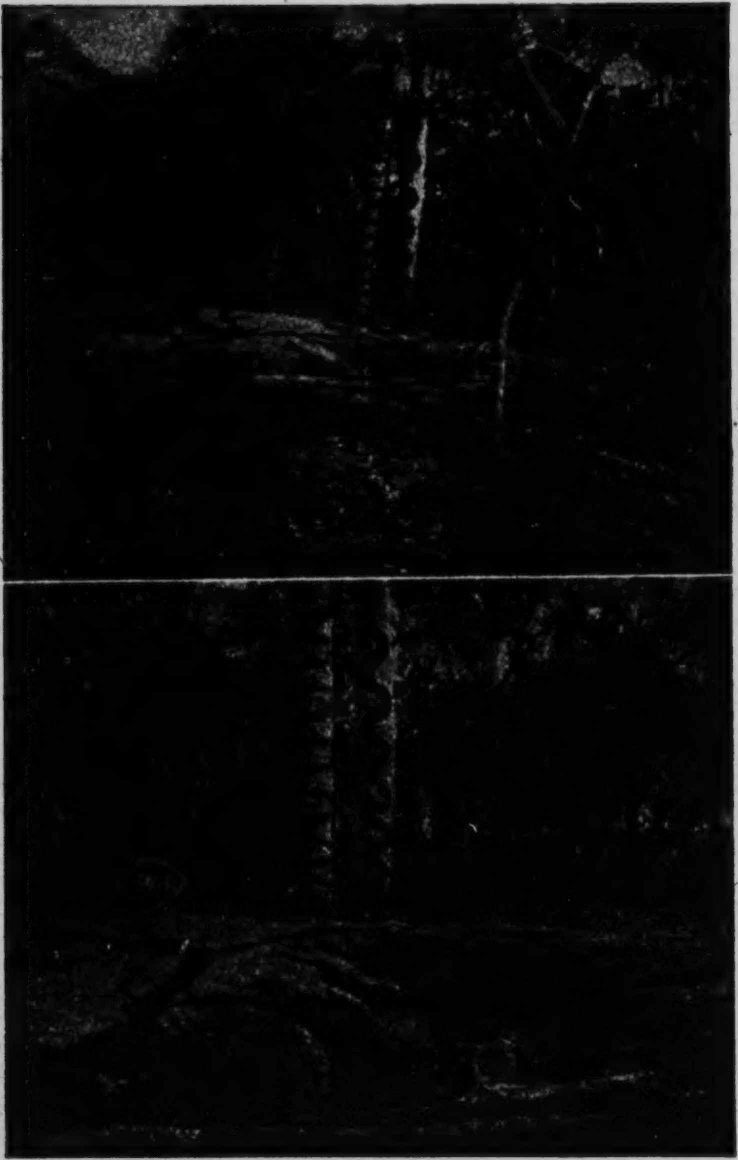

PLATE VIII

[Facing p. 80]

[For captions, see category 116, p. XI]

159 the *nanggaru*; some went into the *nanggaru*, and others went on and
into the *kanala*. All the men with the young initiates called out, when
787 they paused now and then on their way to the *kanala* and *nanggaru*;
796 and they all made a big noise while standing there.

881 "Then the men danced around the *kanala* and *nanggaru*, but did
not go into them. They danced the 'Lightning whipping (that is,
striking) the tree', which we call the *djamala*; but it is also called by
the sacred terms *djeimbalma*, *gurungandungandu*, *w'raidji'kaijunduna*,
kokarara, and *kanggarara*, which mean the flash of lightning striking
and splitting the tree. While we danced, the *dua* men swung the bull-roarers,
which we call *maralpan(dji)*, *pundjarlari* and *kindji:lari*, while
its human hair string attachment (the tail of the Snake) is *jurawa*,
mikara, *libana* or *djuruwalimbana*. The bullroarer is like the Snake
[789] himself calling, for when you swing it, twirling it from the stick to
which the cord is attached, you send lightning all over the place.

"Then we called and sang the sacred names of the *kanala*:
[539] '*kanala ; kanala'indja ; ju:tubilmani : kanu:lanawalkwalkgwina; Kanala'buldjalwondinja ; kanala'djeijil'malindjei ; kanala'madpaindi:nja;
kanala'buramanbir*' (e.g. see Chapter VII, Song 3).

"We turned to the *nanggaru*, the Snake's hole, to the place where
Djuwalji was standing (at *e*), which was the mark made by the Snake
when it came out of the *nanggaru*. And we called and sang the sacred
names of the *nanggaru*: '*nanggaru ; wuninbilibaija ; wa:ngnanggu ;
baiala; djalpunbu; wandi:ku; buldjalwondi; winibini:nbailji ; buldjalwondinja*—the nest in which the Snake lies.'

"We turned to the two *jelmalandji*, the Snake towering over the
place where the initiates had been lying, and the "cabbage" palm
at *g*. And we called and sang their sacred names:

"'*kanggara ; dju:randju:ran'kanggara ; gumanangaleija'angaleija
[539] ; gumanangali:tjbili:tjbi ; gumana'wu:rulndja'wu:rulndja ; ru:kari
; windigwi:agwi:a'windigwi:agwi:a ; djalparu'ru:karwa ; bu:ra:rwa
; wuraldja ; gumalanga'ngeidjangeidja ; gumanang'ngali'djili:dji
; windigwi:agwi:a'djanggara.*' (This last word is chanted when the
Kunapipi headman beats his sticks as the *jelmalandji* are pushed
over.) And we pushed down the *jelmalandji*, so that the *watamunu*,
[616] the emu-feathered tops, fell off. The main *jelmalandji* (*h*) was for the
dua linguistic groups of Marakulu and Ri:radjingu; while the other
(*g*) was for the Murungun, Djapu and Djarwak, *dua* groups.

"As the bullroarer was swung, its string broke, and the loose
piece of wood flew over and hit a *durilji* gum tree: the impact was so
powerful that the tree split, and pieces fell to each side. Then we
walked over to pick up the bullroarer, and as I bent down I awoke."

Gumuk said that anger was the cause of this dream: he had cooked
[828] some rice for his supper, leaving it on the fire. When he came back
for it, it was gone; someone had stolen it. He was "a bit sorry for
himself, because he had been cooking just for nothing". He went to

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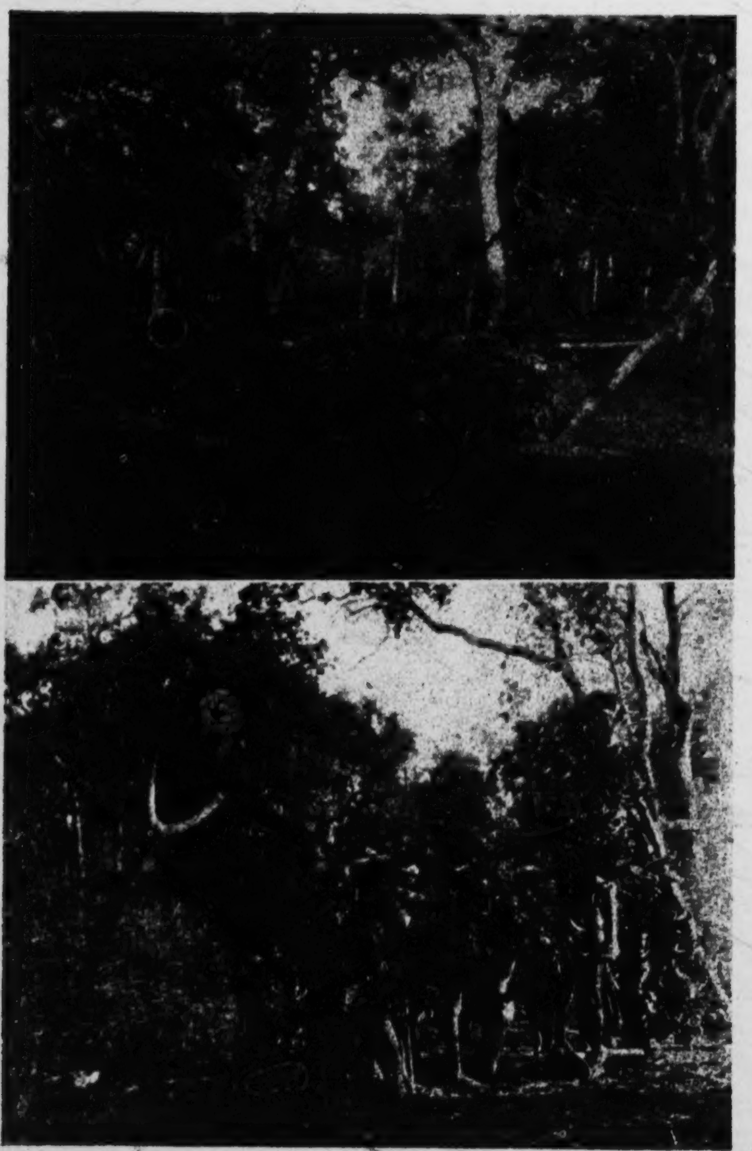

PLATE IX

[Facing p. 81]

[For captions see category 116, p. xii]

sleep feeling hungry, and dreamt about this Kunapipi. That is, he [828]
went back to his "Dreaming" for consolation.

Most of this dream too consists of description of ritual, but not in 159
conventional sequence. Some interesting aspects appear, which 787
amplify our previous discussion of the Kunapipi. There is complete 881
identification of the *jelmalandji* with the Julunggul Snake. But 796
Gumuk re-interpreted the *kanala* and *nanggaru* in commenting on his dream. He said that the *nanggaru* was actually the "Mother's" (that is, the Wauwalak's) uterus, while the *kanala* was the channel ("river") or passage of the vagina, "through which people passed in the Dreaming" (that is, during the period when the Wauwalak walked the earth). He was possibly interpolating here his own theory as to the meaning of these symbols, for usually the *kanala* is the uterus and the *nanggaru* the place of the big Snake. This individual interpretation, however, is extremely valuable; for it is far more logical to classify the *nanggaru*, which is round or oval, as a uterus, and the *kanala*, narrow and resembling a channel, as a vagina. Gumuk's reference to people passing through the *kanala* in the "Dreaming period", is connected with the idea that the Mother "let out" people from her womb, so that they could perform sacred ritual, returning when this was completed. This aspect is not apparent in Yirrkalla mythology; Gumuk possibly assimilated it from Rose
River, where Kunapipi ritual has a stronger hold of the people's [177]
imagination and sacred activity, and where it is more likely to be
influenced by external features.

The calling of the sacred alternate names for the Lightning dancing,
the bullroarer and its string, the *kanala* and *nanggaru*, as well as [552]
for the *jelmalandji*, has not been mentioned before in our discussion.
The concept is found, however, in the calling of the *bukali* (*dua*) or *bukalilji* (*jiritja*), or "power" names of invocation, and some of these are widely distributed. The use of the term *djamala*, in reference to the "Lightning whipping" dance, is equivalent to the *djamala mareiin* mentioned in Chapter IV, which consists of the throwing of firesticks; both refer to the Snake's sending lightning so that a tree was split and the Wauwalak were frightened. The climax of Gumuk's dream is the breaking of the bullroarer's string while it is being twirled: it flies through the air and splits a tree, but is itself undamaged. This symbolizes Julunggul's act of sending lightning to split a tree, for the bullroarer "is like the Snake" (that is, part of its spirit), and its whirling "like lightning". It is the natural culmination of the *djamala* dancing around the *nanggaru* and *kanala*.

159

The final dream also belongs to Gumuk.[5] 787
"I have been dreaming about Kunapipi, and two 'Dreaming' men 796
[574]

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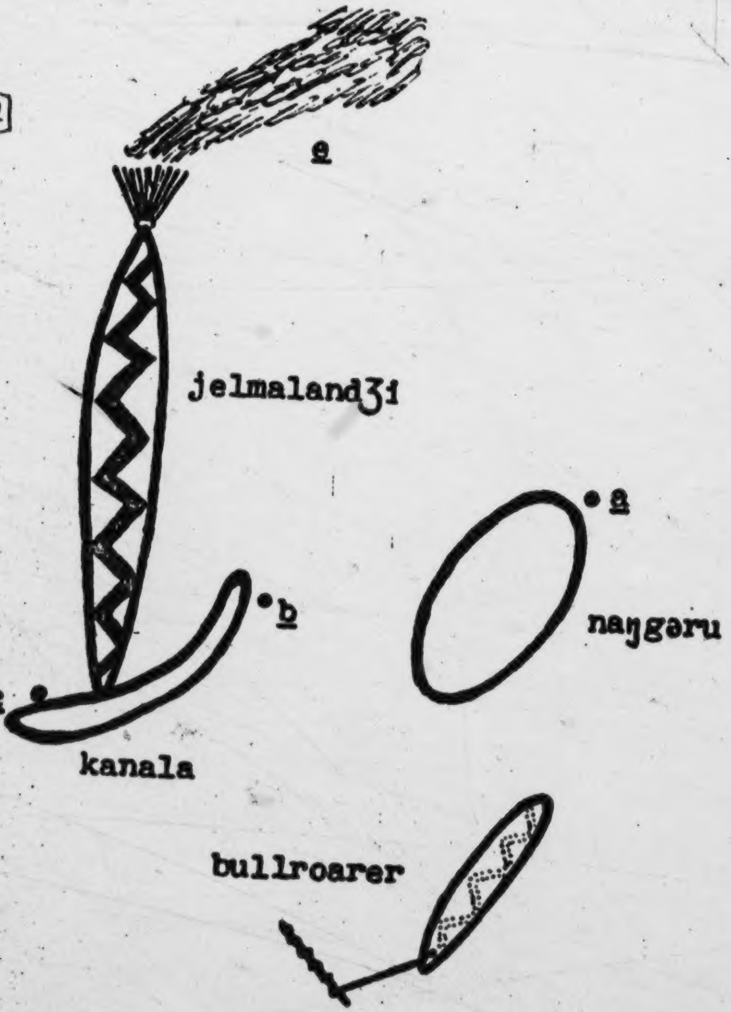
[5] Reference: Book 12, Series A, Dec. 27th, 1946.

159
787 who were *kakawar* (that is, visiting strangers to the Kunapipi ceremonies).

796 "I came along with the *kakawar* through the bush, calling out at
[574]

[532]


e
jelmalandʒi
a
b
naŋgəru
c
kanala
bullroarer

Text Figure 10 *to illustrate Gumuk's second dream: after a drawing by him*

intervals, until we entered the sacred ground where the *nanggaru*, the 159
kanala, and one *jelmalandji* were ready. 787

"One *kakawar* stood (at *a*, in the accompanying sketch figure, 10) 796
outside the *nanggaru* billabong, and the other (at *b*) outside the *kanala* "river"; and they called out. I stood (at *c*) beside the *kanala*. We then rested, while the two *kakawar* made the human-hair cord for the bullroarer (*d*); then one of these men (at *a*) covered his face with leaves, all hanging down from his headband.

"We called out again, and looked over towards the *jelmalandji*, standing upright alongside the *kanala*. From out of its bunch of emu feathers, we saw smoke rising: billows of smoke (*e*) coming from the top of the *jelmalandji*, but no fire. We took hold of the *jelmalandji* and placed it in the *kanala* 'river', which is really the Wauwalak's vagina. We put it in the trench, lying down, like a big penis. Then we danced around the *kanala*, 'taking' opossum dancing, pushing in the mound until the *jelmalandji* was buried and the *kanala* covered.

"After resting, the two *kakawar* men got the bullroarer, which had been left in the *nanggaru*; they attached the cord to a stick, wound it [534]
up, and swung it, and there was a big noise. All the women in the main camp answered it; and other men appeared, and erected a *djepalmandji* between the sacred ground and the main camp. The three of us came down towards it, and saw all the young boys hidden under the framework, and the women sitting in a bunch covered with blankets. And as I looked, I awoke".

Gumuk mentioned that he had this Kunapipi dream because he [828]
was worrying about getting some tobacco to smoke. He was worrying and thinking about this, and dropped off to sleep and dreamt this dream.

As in the last two dreams, the incidents mentioned refer to actual Kunapipi ritual. Gumuk did not try to interpret the smoking *jelmalandji*; but it seems most likely that his desire for tobacco, in order to smoke before sleeping, has been thus projected into the dream. It is not unusual for a secular activity of this kind to appear in dreams devoted mainly to sacred subjects. On the sacred ground itself, tobacco is considered *mareiin* (sacred) and may be smoked only by the Kunapipi headman (or other ceremonial leader) and the elders, although others may step outside the ground and enjoy a smoke in the normal way. In view of this, it does not seem necessary to search for an esoteric reason for the smoking *jelmalandji*; it is possible, too, in a ritualistic sense, for Gumuk to identify himself with the *jelmalandji* (irrespective of the sex of the Julunggul).

Gumuk reiterated his view that the *kanala*, a "river", is really
the Wauwalak's vagina. The *jelmalandji* symbolizes the penis, which [831]
is removed from its upright position and placed in the *kanala* "like a big penis", just as happens in coitus. The opossum dancing around the *kanala* is, as has been mentioned, concerned with simulation of

159 the sexual act, while the covering of the *kanala* and the *jelmalandji*
787 signifies the complete insertion of the penis. This, of course, conforms
796 to what is believed to be the underlying intent of the Kunapipi
[831] ritual and the Wauwalak mythology; through fertilization by the
penis (symbolized by the Snake), the Wauwalak (representing the Fertility Mother) becomes the source of fecundity for human, animal and other species.

The last phase of the dream refers to the final Kunapipi ceremony, in which the *djepalmandji* is used. This rite, signifying rebirth, is a normal outcome of the above ceremony; for from the symbolic act of coitus "someone or something will be born", and in the Kunapipi it is the initiates who emerge from their experience like new people.

* * * *

159
787 These three dreams serve to amplify our discussion of Kunapipi
ritual, and stress its inter-relationship with the basic Wauwalak
121 theme. Some new features are introduced, such as the re-interpretation of the *kanala* and *nanggaru*; but this does not fundamentally alter the conventional intent of Kunapipi ceremonies.

There is possibly a recognized pattern in Kunapipi dreams, over and above descriptive details of its rituals, which may be modified or exaggerated according to individual inclination or personal response. Definite patterns are found in dreams relating to other aspects of Wauwalak mythology or Djanggawul ritual, or to matters of alien contact. Much field work however has yet to be done in the realm of psychological reaction to indigenous (and introduced) religious phenomena.

[pp. 85-203 not processed]

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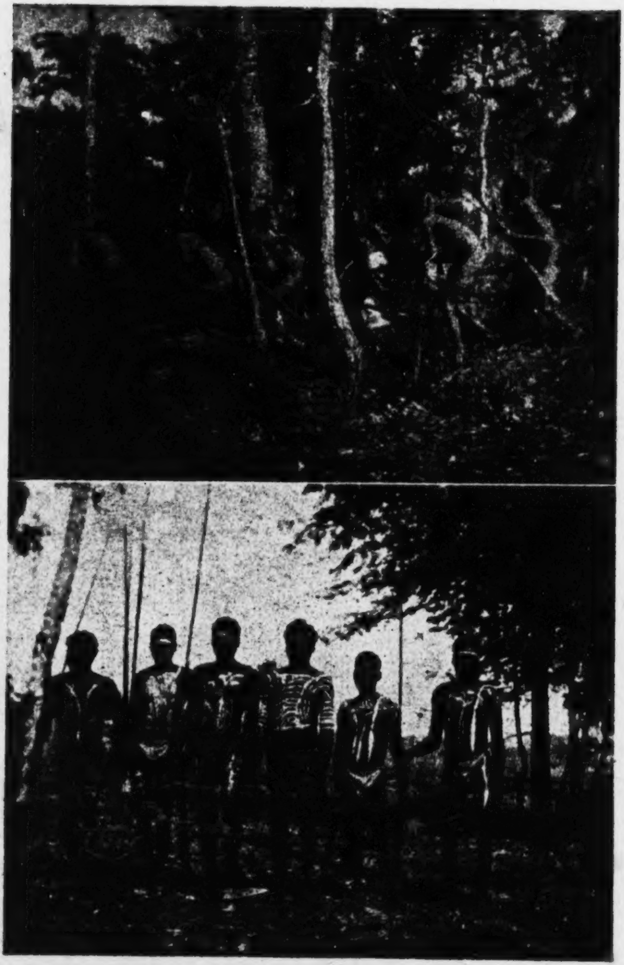

PLATE X

[p. 84(A)]

[For captions, see category 116, p. xii]

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PLATE XI

[p. 84(B)]

[For an analysis of the above plate, see category 116, pp. 62-63. – Analyst]

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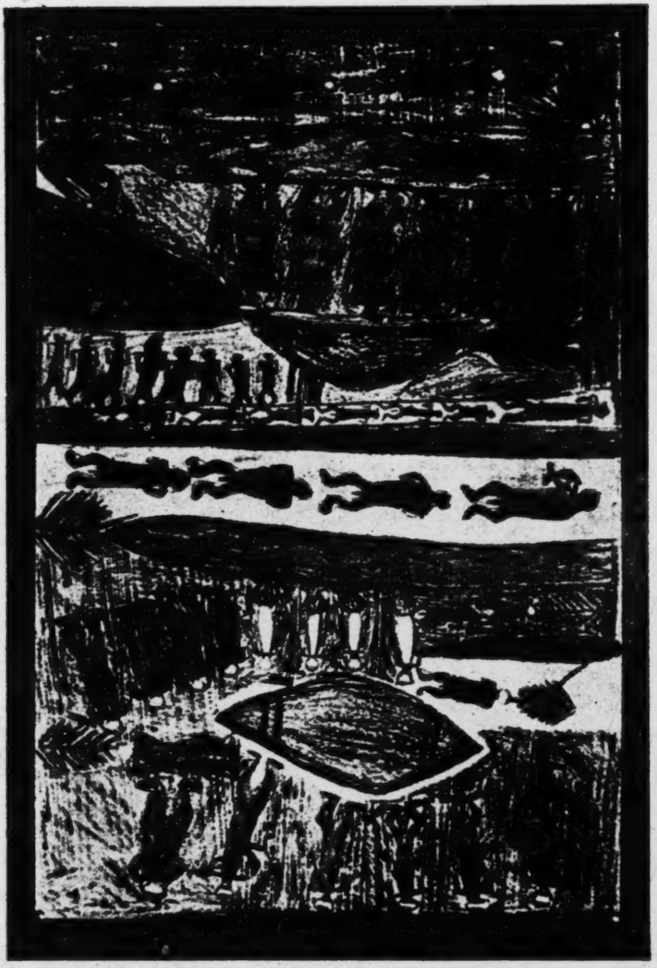

PLATE XII

[p. 84(c)]

[For an analysis of the above plate, see category 116, pp. 65-66. —Analyst]

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

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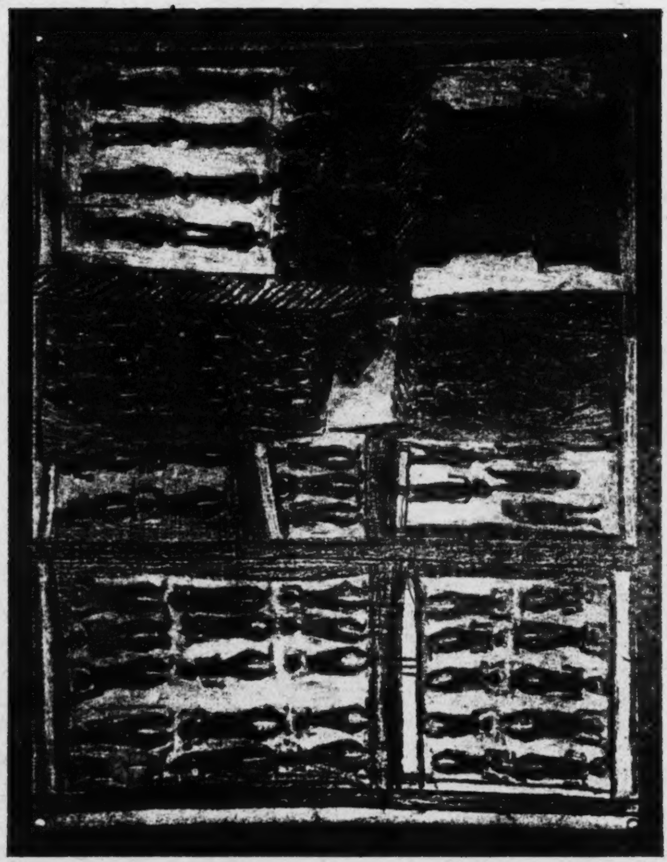

PLATE XIII

[p. 84(D)]
[For an analysis of the above plate, see category 116, pp. 68-69, -Analyst]

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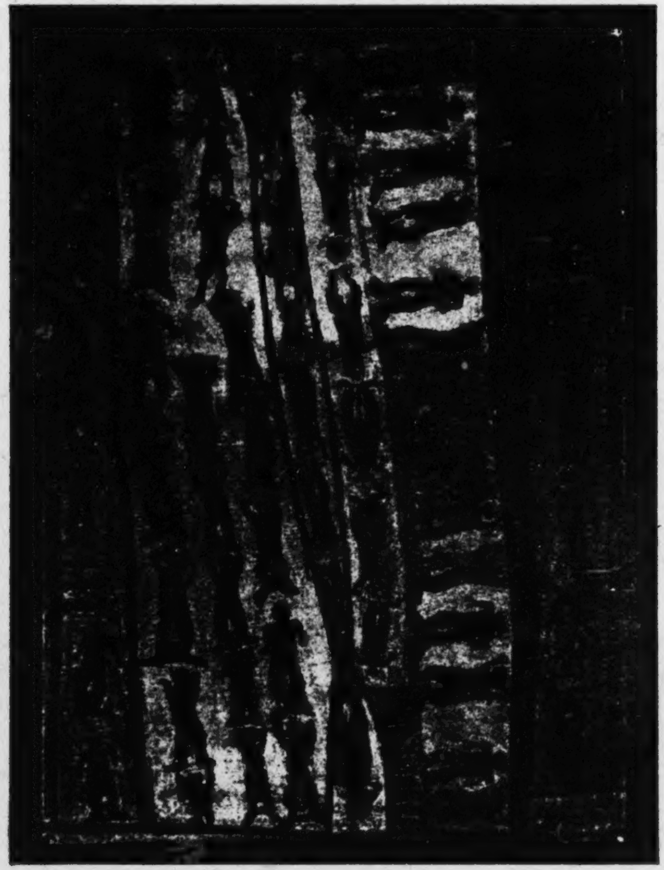

PLATE XIV

[p. 84(E)]

[For an analysis of the above plate, see category 116, p. 70. — Analyst]

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951

OI17 Murngin OI17

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PLATE XV

[p.84(F)]

[For caption see category 116, p. xiii]

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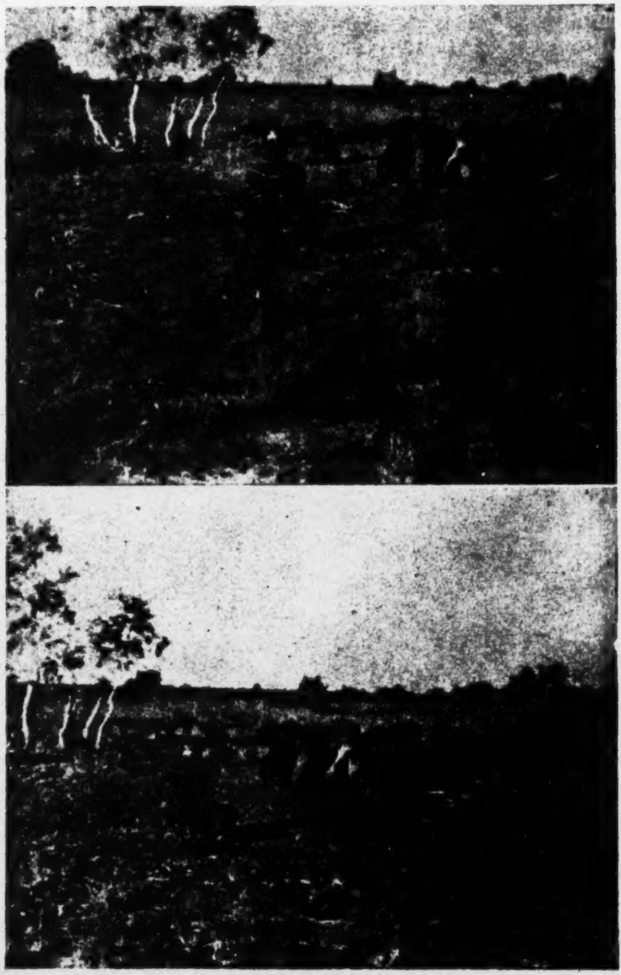

PLATE XVI

[p. 84(G)]

[For captions see category 116, p. xiii]

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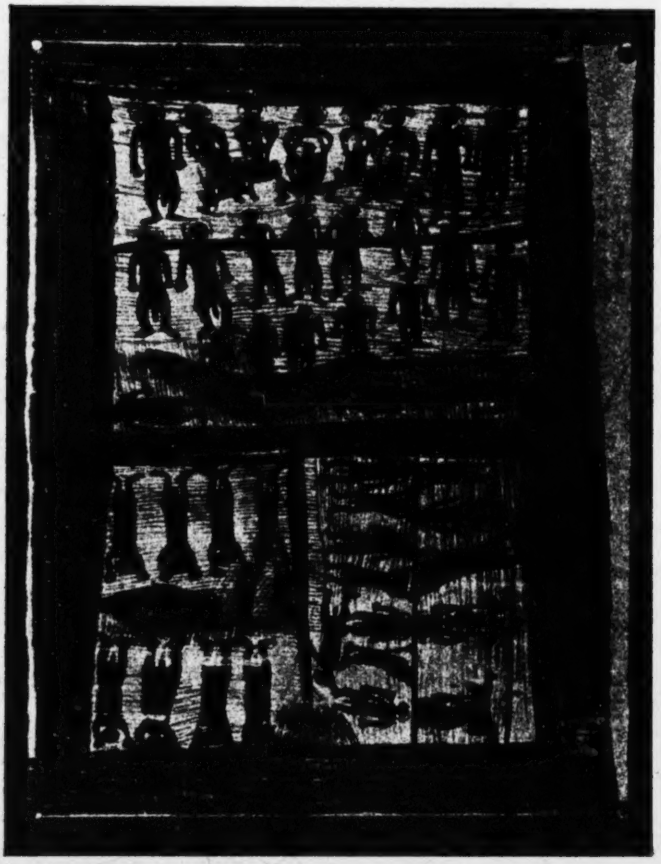

PLATE XVII

[p. 84 (H)]

[For an analysis of the above plate, see category 116, pp. 67-68.—Analyst]

CHAPTER XII

FINALE

The foregoing chapters have indicated something of the fundamental
771 doctrine of the Kunapipi cult, based as it is on the essential
794 human and animal drives of food and sex, and including such
important aspects as the maintenance of food supplies, and procreation, necessary for the continuation of both the human and natural species. In this respect the Kunapipi religious cult is not unlike many others that express the hopes and desires of simple and sophisticated peoples alike. And even when its principal intent is materialistic, it does not exclude spiritual conceptions: in fact, these latter are of major importance.

Here, in Aboriginal Australia, among contemporary aborigines, exists this vivid and vital cult, expressing their own religious view of life: it is correlated with their traditional background and social institutions, and so intimately concerns their spiritual personality structure. Moreover, it is well adapted to their particular environment, since the great Spirit Beings themselves are associated with the country the aborigines know and love; and each man, woman and child has a part in this religious concept, for he (or she) is akin to the Mother. That is to say, their religion is a response to their particular material and spiritual requirements, in such a way that it is a very real and important aspect of each person's life. There is no sharp demarcation between secular and sacred life, because the one is so closely interwoven with the other. This religious concept, too, is not confined to men; it is equally important and significant to women. Each sex has its own particular sphere of activity and interest.

The religion of an indigenous native group, which has had little or no alien contact, is a living faith, something quite inseparable from the pattern of everyday life and thought.

177 With the introduction of alien ideas, through intensive European
contact, this fundamental faith is shattered to a greater or lesser
771 degree, according to the intensity and type of that contact. In most
794 parts of Arnhem Land where Missions have been established, there
is the impact of Christian teaching, of ideals which are not intimately
797 concerned with the life of the native people, which often contrast sharply with indigenous traditional themes, and which belong to a strange and different cultural background. The repercussions of this impact, therefore, are frequently severe.

Christianity, with its attendant ritual and belief, is apparently 177
inseparable, in this context, from Western European culture, and for 771
that reason it assumes a dominant and militant aspect. The indigen- 794
ous culture, however, lacking the other's wide range of material 797
objects and technology, and the subtleties of fanatic evangelization, seems as a rule powerless to resist.

Missionaries on the north coast of Arnhem Land and elsewhere
in this region have made little attempt to understand the underlying 177
motives of native ideology and their religious view of life. The 794
majority (with a couple of exceptions) contend that Aboriginal 797
religion is not a religion in the strict sense of the word, for to most of them religion is translatable only in terms of Christianity. With this conventional bias, they see only certain superficial aspects of such cults as the Kunapipi,[1] which they have not attempted to link with fundamental belief. They have not appreciated the importance of the Fertility Mother and the Rainbow Snake, nor the stress on certain erotic features. Ceremonial copulation is viewed as debauchery and unbridled lust, while women are said to live in virtual terror of the use which is made of them at such a time. In our study of the Kunapipi cult, as it normally functions, we have observed a different picture.

It is not our purpose here, however, to defend Aboriginal religious belief and activity, nor to discuss the relevant virtues of each religion. We need mention only that in the region under discussion the impact of Christianity, as presented by the Missions, has produced some change in the indigenous religion. Moreover, change of this kind has been brought about not only through the active interference of the Church, but through the gradual and indirect introduction of European secular concepts. The Mission is not only an agency for the Christian religion. It is the vanguard too of all the more materialistic elements which attend European cultural life; for Christianity means, to most, Europeanization. The balanced life and economy of the aborigines has been irrevocably upset, with resulting disorganization. The Kunapipi too has suffered, and is rarely seen in its entirety to-day, although its basic rituals and concepts have as yet (in Arnhem Land for example) remained relatively unaltered. Its adherents have, however, been driven to secrecy; and its ceremonies are for the most part carried out in the bush, away from Mission Stations and settlements. Ceremonial copulation has been frowned upon by the Missions, and in some cases this element of the Kunapipi is either omitted altogether or carried out surreptitiously.

On the other hand, the Missions' almost unanimous opposition to

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[1] The question of sexual behaviour, in particular, seems to arouse strong reactions, when the indigenous culture offers manifestations that differ widely from accepted European conventions. It is apparently simpler in this case to condemn, than to study and investigate without prejudice.

177 794 797 Kunapipi performances has served to strengthen native belief in its efficacy; but this tendency will last only as long as do the members of "the older generation".

[831] By the driving underground, so to speak, of the Kunapipi, its sexual element has become considerably accentuated. In some cases, ritual copulation has lost a certain proportion of its sacred aura and serves as an excuse for promiscuity. This aspect is particularly apparent in contact areas where detribalization has taken place, and intensive cultural disintegration has resulted.

177 794 778 648 For example, on war-time Army Settlements during 1944–46 the performance of the Kunapipi (or "Big Sunday", as it was called) was forbidden by Civil and Army authorities alike, on the grounds that the big religious ceremonies entailed interruption of normal work. As a result of this prohibition very few of the sacred ceremonies were carried out, although a number were performed surreptitiously some distance from the Settlements, and were consequently of brief duration. One development of this external control was the accentuation of sexual promiscuity through the medium of the "Big Sunday", and the indiscriminate use of sacred tabus for the materialistic ends of a minority. In the latter case, food, clothing, and other goods were sometimes declared sacred, and could in this way be taken over by the person or the group pronouncing the tabu.

[837] Whole areas of the settlement would, unknown to the womenfolk, be declared ritually sacred to men: latrines, washing-sheds, camps, roads and so on were pronounced tabu-ed to women. A woman inadvertently entering the demarcated area would be threatened with punishment, which she could avert through payment of goods or sexual favours: usually, of course, she preferred to "pay" with coitus.

This practice reached such proportions that Settlement officers endeavoured strongly to oppose it, and cited it as an additional reason for prohibiting the Kunapipi ceremonies; nevertheless the habit persisted, and seems to have aroused interest and enjoyment among both men and women. On the Daly River, west of Darwin, a rather similar practice has become institutionalized, in attempts to reinforce a religious life which is fast disappearing because of the disrupting effects of local European contact over a comparatively long period. Other examples, too, could be brought forward to confirm this particular distortion of "Big Sunday" religion.

But these features are abnormal; they have been brought about by circumstances beyond the control of the natives themselves, and represent merely one unpleasant result of uncontrolled or badly planned contact between two widely differing cultures. They would not normally appear, for they are not a part of indigenous religious life.

177 794 We might well ask what is the future of a cult like the Kunapipi.

Can it continue to exist in its present form, in a situation of culture 177 contact? Example has shown that under abnormal circumstances, when the inroads of an alien culture have attacked the social struc- 794 ture of the indigenous society, its survival odds are relatively low. Collapse of Aboriginal community life brings disillusionment, loss of [182] faith in accepted doctrines, and consequent maladjustment. That is to say, as contact becomes more intensive, a cult of the Kunapipi variety will become correspondingly corrupted, and its principal intent will be overshadowed by the distortion of certain aspects which will inevitably serve to destroy it completely.

On the other hand, a cult of this type, which so adequately fulfils an aboriginal's religious requirements within his own cultural environment, is so much a part of his material and psychological make-up, and expresses the basic urges and necessities of his life, should surely find some place in his changing society, among widening interests. This should ideally be the case if the aboriginal is to retain something of his individuality, and not become merely a stereotyped imitation of the European. But this ideal form of adaptation is not to be found in North Australia to-day, and there are no indications that it will be so in the future. Although the indigenous religious faiths still retain their full significance in some [178] areas, in others they are gradually changing, and their hold on the [771] people's life is weakening. In some regions they are merely a shadow of their former selves, distorted to meet the selfish aims of a few maladjusted and frustrated tribal remnants.

Still, however, in outlying camps where aboriginal life proceeds comparatively undisturbed (and there are few such areas to-day) the twirling bullroarer is heard, and the answering call of the women; there is rhythmic singing, and the stamping of dancing feet on the sacred ground echoes through the quietness of the Bush. People have come together to renew their faith, to refresh themselves spiritually, and to ensure that the continuity of the seasons is maintained, as well as the continuance of the life they know and appreciate. The pervading influence of the Great Mother is, to them, a reality.

APPENDIX I

171
794 In the main body of this work some mention has been made of ceremonial copulation during the performance of the Kunapipi.
796 Our examples were taken principally from north-eastern and southern Arnhem Land, with reference to the Roper River region; and
831 for comparison with these the following data from western Arnhem Land are presented.

During our field work in the western Arnhem Land region, at the Goulburn Islands and Oenpelli, little reference was made to the Kunapipi ceremonies;[1] it was said that these were introduced by
[177] Reinbaranga people from the south and south-east, in the direction of the Roper River, or that they came from the Milingimbi area to the east.

Recently, however, the writer's chief informant at South Goulburn
[115] Island, a Maung man named Small Ngolaman (or Nangolominj), who is incidentally one of the very few literate aborigines on the north coast of the Northern Territory, and who has been "keeping track" of certain problems in the region during our absence, writes that the Kunapipi is known to some of the mainland men who visit Goulburn Island. The Kunapipi, as we are already aware, is carried out in the vicinity of Oenpelli, and in the upper Liverpool River area, under the auspices of Reinbaranga or Milingimbi leaders, and is known (but not practised) at Goulburn Island.

Small Ngolaman's preliminary statement[2] reveals some very interesting features; for example, the use of one girl on the sacred ground needs more accompanying data, since it bears a striking similarity to the more western type, as carried out by the old Larakia tribe; this will however be dealt with later. Ngolaman's informant
[115] was a Maung man, named Inmindjur.

"Messengers are sent out, notifying the various groups that the
[203] Kunapipi is to be held. When the people come in to the ceremonial camp, the rituals begin. The Kunapipi headman chooses a young
794 girl, and takes her away from the main camp to the sacred ground. She is placed in a big bough shade or hut, recently built by the young
796 initiated men; she lies there on her back. Two holes are dug, one on
831 each side of her; a strong post is placed in each, and rammed

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[1] *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Section IX.

[2] *Correspondence* to R. Berndt, October 4th, 1948.

right down. The girl's legs are tied to the posts, so that her legs are 831
outstretched between them. (We know of no other reference to the 794
actual tying down of the Kunapipi girl who has been chosen for 796
ceremonial coitus. As a young girl is specified, this probably refers
to ritual defloration which has been mentioned briefly elsewhere— [114]
vide Chapters IV, V and X. It suggests also that force is used to hold the girl, a feature which should not normally accompany this rite; moreover, promiscuity is such a feature of this area, with the breaking down of indigenous regulations governing sexual conduct, that one would not expect it to be necessary.)

The men then paint themselves, and line up for dancing. There may be two or three hundred men on the sacred ground. The headman begins to beat his clapping sticks, while the dancing men clap their hands rhythmically to the music and song, and call out intermittently. Then the first man, at the head of the long line of dancing men, leaves [833]
the line and goes into the shade and copulates with the Kunapipi girl; the other men continue clapping their hands and calling out.

Under the girl, immediately beneath her vulva, a small depression has been dug and in it has been placed a shallow paperbark dish; this catches the semen and vaginal juices that come out of the girl.

When the first man has left the hut, another takes his place; this is continued until all the men in the line have entered the hut and copulated, and their semen has flowed from the girl into the paperbark container.

By this time, the container is full; and after a rest, the men remove [302]
it from the hut and begin to paint themselves with the semen; then they continue their dancing, which goes on from early morning until sunset. Ceremonial coitus takes place each day for several weeks, different girls being chosen for each ceremony." Other rituals relating to the Kunapipi are also performed in a sequence similar to that already discussed.

It should be mentioned that the reason given for thus decorating [842]
the postulants' bodies with designs in semen and vaginal juices is the belief in the fructifying potency of the former. The act of [789]
ceremonial coitus is itself symbolic of fertilization, and the subsequent increase of human and the natural species; semen is the essence which causes pregnancy; and this natural and logical belief is an integral part of the rituals of the Kunapipi fertility cult.

There is also an association between semen and the saliva of the [773]
Julunggul Snake (*vide* Chapter III, *et seq.*); it was with this substance that Julunggul smeared the Wauwalak and the child prior to swallowing. This "saliva" is represented by white pipe-clay in parts of [386]
the Kunapipi, and it is with this that Kunapipi neophytes are painted.

114 Since writing this book, the author and his wife have been able to spend a further period of anthropological research (1949-1950) in western Arnhem Land around Oenpelli, and in central-northern Arnhem Land about Milingimbi Island in the Crocodile Group.

At Oenpelli the complete series of Kunapipi rituals was seen twice through,
126 photographed, and descriptions recorded; to supplement this, a mass of data
was collected in relation to Kunapipi song cycles and mythology (mostly in
114 interlinear text). The Oenpelli rituals relating to this cult have been introduced
794 to this area within recent years, and were under the direction of ceremonial
headmen with Gunwinggu affinities, whose home territory lay further to the
south-east towards south-western Arnhem Land (the source of the Liverpool
and Wilton Rivers). The cult had been brought into north-central Arnhem
[177] Land from the south on the one hand, and from north-central Arnhem Land
via the source of the Liverpool on the other. The rituals witnessed by the author
were the first complete series ever performed at Oenpelli; a number of adult
[881] Gunwinggu men (otherwise fully initiated) passed through them as "novices",
being obliged to undertake all the customary and relevant obligations. The first
series was held about half-way through the monsoonal season, and the second
a little before the onset of the dry weather.

In the Milingimbi region full groups of songs relating to the Kunapipi were recorded, together with all relevant data.

The above will be discussed and presented in a future volume dealing with the regions concerned.

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6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951

OI17 Murngin OI17

102
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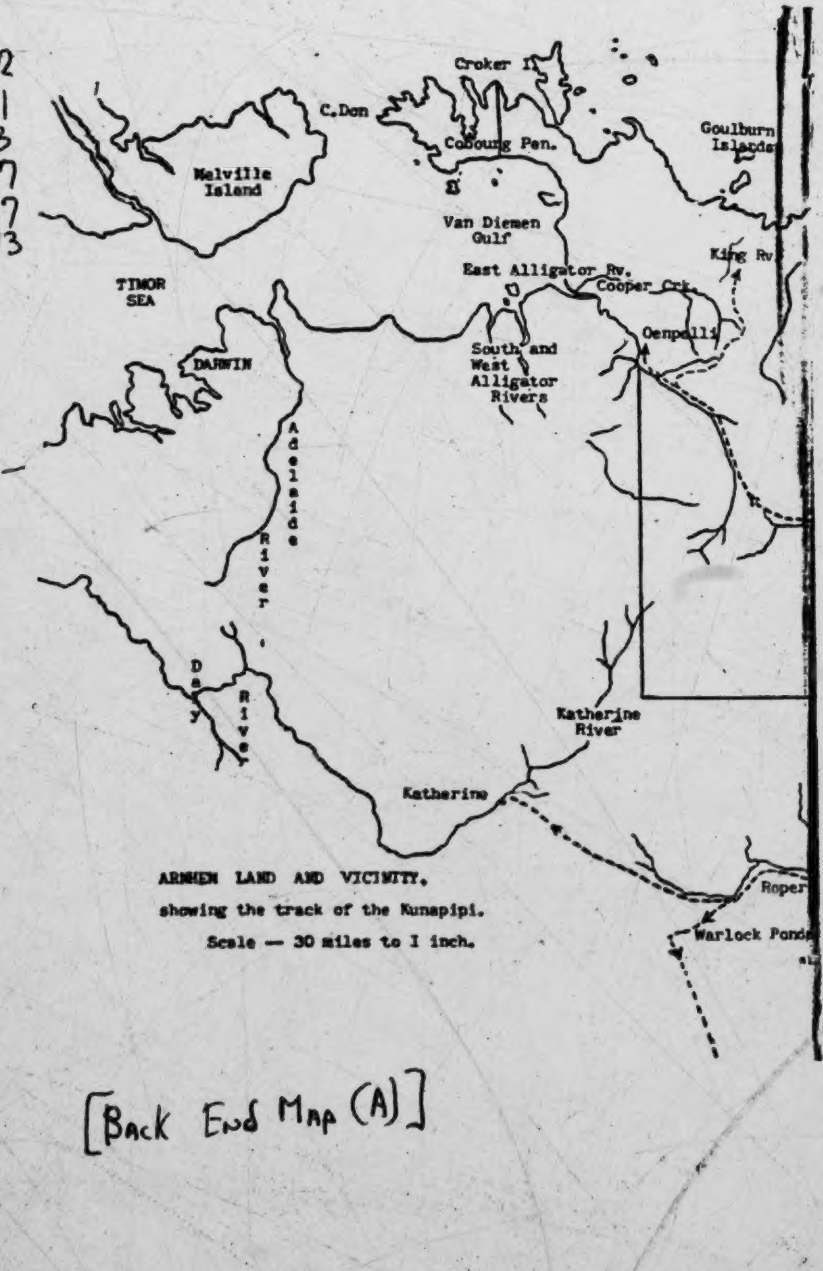
Croker I.
C.Don
Cobourg Pen.
Goulburn Islands
Melville Island
Van Diemen Gulf
King Rv.
East Alligator Rv.
Cooper Crk.
TIMOR SEA
Oenpelli
DARWIN
South and West Alligator Rivers
Adelaide River
Daly River
Katherine River
Katherine
Roper
Warlock Ponds

ARNHEM LAND AND VICINITY,
showing the track of the Kunapipi.
Scale — 30 miles to I inch.

[Back End Map (A)]

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951

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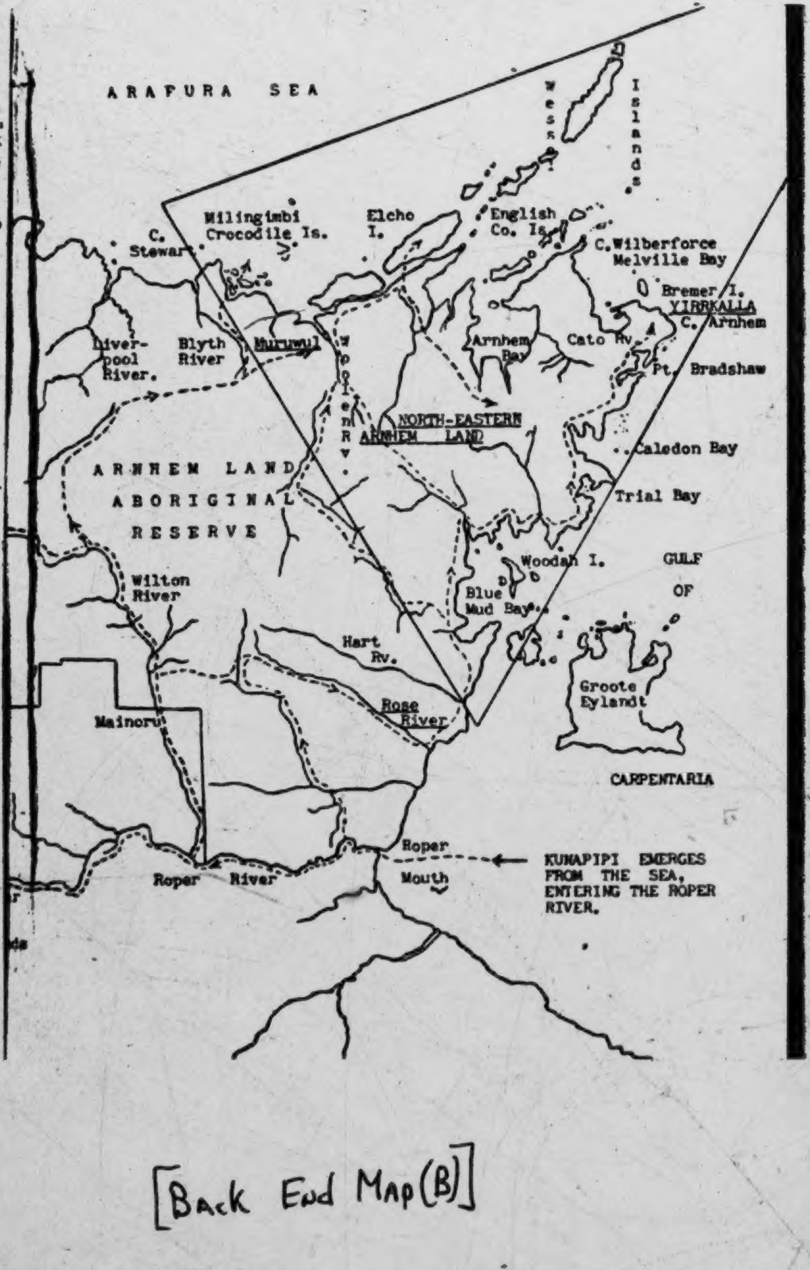
ARAFURA SEA
Wessel Islands
Milingimbi
Crocodile Is.
Elcho I.
English Co. Is.
C. Stewart
C. Wilberforce
Melville Bay
Bremer I.
YIRRKALLA
C. Arnhem
Liverpool River.
Blyth River
Murumul
Woolen Rv.
Arnhem Bay
Cato Rv.
Pt. Bradshaw
NORTH-EASTERN ARNHEM LAND
Caledon Bay
ARNHEM LAND ABORIGINAL RESERVE
Trial Bay
Woodah I.
GULF OF CARPENTARIA
Wilton River
Blue Mud Bay
Hart Rv.
Groote Eylandt
Mainoru
Rose River
Roper
Roper River
Mouth
KUNAPIPI EMERGES FROM THE SEA, ENTERING THE ROPER RIVER.

[Back End Map (B)]